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MORAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL
ESTIMATES
OF THE
STATE AND FACULTIES
OF
M A N;

AND OF THE
NATURE AND SOURCES
OF
HUMAN HAPPINESS.
A SERIES OF DIDACTIC LECTURES.

V O L. III.

L O N D O N,
PRINTED FOR B. WHITE AND SON, AT
HORACE'S HEAD, FLEET-STREET,
MDCCLXXXIX.

LECTURES ON PSYCHOLOGICAL

ESTIMATES

OF THE

STATUS OF FACULTIES

ON

M. A. N.

AND OF THE

NATURE AND SOURCES

OF

HUMAN HAPPINESS

A SERIES OF DIDACTIC LECTURES

VOL. III

LONDON

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1847

E S T I M A T E X X I .

T H E
V A L U E
O F
S O C I A L A N D P U B L I C W O R S H I P .

One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will
require: even that I may dwell in the house of
the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair
beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple.

Pfalm xxvii. 4.

V O L . I I I .

B

T H E

THE TEMPLE

THE

VOLUME

SOCIAL AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

Containing two I believe of the same kind, and I will
report: even that I may dwell in the house of
the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the
glory of the Lord, and to sing his praises.

THE

B

VOL. III.

THE
V A L U E
OF
SOCIAL AND PUBLIC WORSHIP.

SOCIAL and public worship, as it employs both the mind and the heart of man, and that with the important doctrines of religion, is a matter entirely peculiar to Christianity. Every religion had its rites, its solemnities, and its festivals; all of them assembled their confessors at stated times, and on certain occasions, in their temples, and at the altars of their Gods; all of them spread fear and terror, more or less, about them; all of them employed and dazzled the senses of their worshipers with more

or less ornament and pomp.—But in none of them was sound and wholesome nourishment administered to the mind and heart of thinking and sentimental men; none provided for their illumination and instruction, for their moral improvement, for their comfort and repose. No where was man made acquainted with his end and origin, informed of his duties, and guided in his conduct; no where taught the rational worship and adoration of God; no where incited to virtue and directed to happiness. All this is the peculiar boast of the religion of Jesus. And what a great distinction and superiority does it give it! Who can estimate all the good that has accrued from it, and still accrues?—I am not to be informed that public and congregational worship, even where it is the least perverted from its proper object, is not always productive of what it might effect. It is administered by men; and who knows not how frequently the best
and

and most excellent institutions of creatures, so liable to fall into error, may be misapplied? and as it is dispensed by men, so is it likewise attended and used by men; and how easily do we lose sight of the true end of things, and make them administer to our indolence or our passions! But is it allowable to deny any thing its value, because of eventual abuse? No; public and social worship is undoubtedly of very great value, be it as frequently and shamefully abused as it may. It is, and will ever remain an excellent means of instruction, improvement, and comfort, of awakening and exercising devotion and piety, of serving the cause of humanity, and of promoting universal brotherly love.

How much cause have we to prize our national, established, congregational worship! how much to frequent it with inward satisfaction and delight! Of this I heartily hope to convince you in my pre-

sent discourse. To this end, let me examine with you,

The value of congregational and public worship.

But, in this research, we must proceed with extreme caution and impartiality, as we are so liable to be misled by superstition and prejudice. Let us, therefore, at the same time see, as well,

Wherein the value of worship cannot consist, as likewise

Wherein it actually does consist; or, as well what it cannot be and cannot perform, as what it really is and does afford.

Congregational and public worship, as well as all worship in general, has no value whatever as an ultimate end, but only as a means to some higher purpose. As eat-

ing and drinking, bodily motion and exercise, are not ends, but means of preserving our terrestrial life, of establishing our health, and of improving our faculties; so likewise instruction and reflection, all worship and exercises of piety, are no more than means of nourishing our spirit, of inspiring us with desire and ability to goodness, and thereby of promoting our perfection and happiness. The same holds good of private worship, and of all that we observe and practise in divine service. We there worship God, not for the sake of worshipping him; for he wants not our homage and our service; but we worship him, from the deep and lively sense we have of his greatness and perfection, and our dependance upon him, to invigorate every pious sentiment, to vanquish every turbulent passion, to dismiss every corroding care, and to increase our readiness and aptitude to do what is just and good, what is generous and great. We there pray, not

for the sake of praying; for God knows what we want, and does continually what is best; but we pray, for the sake of elevating our spirit, of purifying and composing our heart, and of rendering ourselves fitter for the mercy of God, and more susceptible of the influence of his spirit. We allow ourselves to be instructed there in our duties, in the design of our existence, and in the will of the Most High, not for the sake of being instructed therein; but that we may the better discharge our duties, more certainly answer the end of our being, and more faithfully comply with the will of our Lord. We there reflect upon the doctrines of religion and christianity, not for the sake of reflecting on them, but to experience their force to our tranquillity and amendment by these reflections. We there renew our most sacred resolves, and our most solemn vows, not so much for the sake of renewing them, as to imprint them the deeper in our hearts, and to reduce

duce

duce them to practice with more fervour and zeal. We there make a public profession of our belief of the doctrines and promises of Jesus, not for the sake of making this profession, but thereby to confirm ourselves in that faith, to strengthen our confidence in those promises, that we may live more conformably to them both. And thus are all the parts of worship, not ends but means. We use them, not on our account, but for the good effects and consequences they may and ought to have. In these, and not in those, consists all the value of worship.

It possesses this value only in so far as it is rational, so far as it is founded on truth, on just conceptions of God and his will, and our connection with him, and on such dispositions as are consonant to these conceptions; only in so far as it employs the understanding and the heart of the worshiper in a manner worthy of his nature, and the

the ends of his creation. The worship of the Christian must be rational, his adoration of God must be in spirit and in truth. A worship which only occupies and amuses the senses, which either dazzles or beguiles by art and ornament, by pomp and sound, which consists in empty ceremonies and rites, affords nothing for the mind to think on, and communicates no true, no generous, no noble feelings to the heart; such a worship can possess no higher value than other theatrical exhibitions, which attract the eyes of the multitude, and furnish them with entertainment or distraction. Still less real value does a superstitious worship possess, which gives us low and false conceptions of the Deity; which degrades its votaries by servile fears and slavish terror; conceals the Father of men from their sight, and substitutes in his place an austere and implacable despot, an inexorable judge; at the same time flattering their passions, emancipating them from
indif.

indispensable duties, presenting them with the palliatives of false repose, and attributing force and efficacy to mere outward actions, to bodily observances, which they have not, and cannot have. It is written, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

As little advantage, thirdly, can we derive from our worship, if we have not regard to the disposition of mind in which we frequent it, the views we have therein, and the use to which we apply it. It is not our attendance on its offices, but the solid purport of this attendance, that renders it agreeable to God, and a source of benefit to ourselves. Acts of devotion do not operate upon us like the incantations of magic, without our participation or concurrence; they improve us neither against our will, nor without our consent. They are performed in the presence of God, the searcher of hearts; and he is not
to

to be imposed on by outward appearance, like men. No; only the consciousness and consideration, the earnestness and reflection, with which we perform our devotions; only reverence, love, satisfaction, and confidence, the desire to please and to resemble God; only positive purposes of becoming wiser and better; only these can confer any real value on our acts of devotion.

Hence therefore it follows, that our worship can neither repair our former transgressions, nor supply the place of a virtuous and pious life, nor procure us particular blessings and testimonies of favour from God, without regard to its consequences and effects. He that expects these from his acts of worship, ascribes to it a power which it does not possess; he therefore forms superstitious notions both of its destination and its value. To such an one we may address the apostrophe of God in one of the prophets. “To what purpose

purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? to what purpose is the hypocritical reverence you shew me? Your worship is disagreeable to me, I am weary to bear it. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood; your hearts and your lives are contaminated with vice." No, neither praying, nor singing, nor communicating, nor keeping festivals, only actual amendment, only restoration of property unjustly obtained, only earnest endeavours to renounce every kind of depravity, and to embrace every opportunity of doing good; only this can efface our sins, and remove their pernicious effects from ourselves and from others. Only redoubled industry in virtue and piety can adequately compensate for the negligence we have hitherto shewn. Only innocency of heart and probity of life, only uprightness and integrity, can
make

make us fit for the favour of God, and render us partakers of his distinguished blessings.

Take heed then of expecting from worship in general, and from public and congregational worship in particular, more than it is able to perform, and of thus ascribing to it a value which it does not possess. Learn rather its true, its peculiar worth, and strive ever more fully to enjoy what it is able effectually to procure you. Wherein then consists this worth? what are the benefits it procures us? Instruction, amendment, serenity, and comfort, the incitement, and the exercise of devotion, the improvement of humanity, and the furtherance of universal brotherly love: this is what we may reasonably expect from public and social worship. And what a great and inestimable value does this confer upon it!

Instruction,

Instruction, and that on the most important matters, matters of the highest concern to all mankind. We are instructed in the knowledge of God, of his will, of our own destination, of our duties, and of the way to happiness. We are instructed in what God is in regard to us, and what we are in respect to him, in what we at present are, and what we shall hereafter be. We are instructed in all that can captivate the curiosity of man, and most agreeably employ both his understanding and his heart. Let these instructions be as defective as they may; let them be never so much mingled with error; yet how much is the knowledge of truth and the conviction of truth, considered at large, promoted thereby! How much light is diffused amongst all classes and conditions of men! what incitement to reflection, what diversified exercise does it occasion to the mental powers! One person is reminded of what he already knew and believed, and

will

will thereby be confirmed in his knowledge and faith; another will clearly perceive what was totally concealed from him before, or only floated about in the gloomy recesses of his mind; a third will be rendered attentive to some doctrine of importance, feel the full weight of its truth, and be led to think it over again; a fourth views some truth he had already discovered in a clearer light on a different side, in other and more various connections, and thus acquires a plainer and completer knowledge of it; another combines it with his habitual way of thinking, learns to apply it more pointedly to himself, and thus turn it to the best account. One is freed from a doubt, and another from an error. A careless and inattentive person is brought to reflect, and indifference is quickened into concern. At least some sort of impression must be made of God, of religion, of duty, and virtue, of our future expectations, and the ultimate end of man. And
how

how is it possible for impressions so frequently retouched and repaired to be totally obliterated and effaced? Certainly no truth, no sound and wholesome doctrine delivered with energy can be delivered absolutely in vain. They are grains of wheat strewn by the servants of the Lord of the church under his own inspection, which will spring up, some sooner, and others later, and produce fruit, more or less, according to the richness of the soil into which they are cast; and at the day of the harvest it will be seen how well-founded were the hopes of the sower, and how prolific the seed he sowed.

Encouragement and incitement to duty and virtue is another advantage we may expect from our attendance on divine worship, and which undoubtedly gives it a great value. In how many various ways are we there incited and encouraged to duty and virtue! The commands, the pro-

misers, and the menaces of God; the benefits and example of Jesus; the fitness and reasonableness of duty; the beauty, the amiableness, the necessity of virtue; the infamy and pernicious effects of vice; the dignity of man, and the dignity of the christian; joyful and terrifying views of the present and the future life; the inward sentiment of what is right and good; our own experiences and those of others; self-love; desire of applause, philanthropy, hope and fear; life and death, misery and happiness; what motives to duty and virtue are hence to be raised and enforced! what arguments to lead and impel the human soul! what powers for moving the human heart! The very passions are here pressed into the service of virtue and truth; and what prejudice against practical christianity is here left unconquered? what pretences of sloth are not here subdued? what calumnies and evasions are here left unanswered? And if when the possibility and easiness

clearness of the matter is shewn, the way and manner in which a man is to begin it pointed out, and the means furnished him to that end; must not all this produce good? must it not be productive of much good? must it not be highly advantageous to the performance of duty, and the practice of virtue? must it not occasion thousands and ten thousands of good sentiments and actions amongst mankind?

Indeed, experience allows us as little to doubt of it as the nature of the case itself. No, all do not depart unimproved from these schools of wisdom and virtue. Many have to thank them for inducement and excitation to amendment, many for their return to the way of duty, many for precautions against sin, for taste and inclination to goodness. How often does a truth, important to the religion or the morals of a man, dart like a pure ray of light into his darkened soul, pierce into the inmost

recesses of it, and strike him with hope or fear, with trouble or with joy; discover to him the principles of his actions, and the real frame of his life; beget in him the noblest wishes and the best designs; accompany him to his habitation, attend him in all his affairs, pursue him in all the companies he frequents, and let him have no rest till he surrender himself to its influence, and fully experience its improving and blessing power!—How many a wicked purpose is rendered abortive, as he, who conceived and cherished it in his breast, hears some certain doctrine or precept of religion, particularly suited to him, delivered with sentiment and force, and directed by the kindness of Providence, is struck and alarmed at it, brought to reflection, and moved to an alteration of mind! how many a good and christian deed, how many a reconciliation with opponents and foes, how many a resolution to lead a new life, how many an advance-
ment

ment in virtue, how many acts of liberality have been occasioned by pastoral discourses and attendance on worship! how many fallies of violent and brutal passions been prevented!—And even if these effects fall out but rarely, if it be only now and then that a wicked person is induced to forsake the error of his ways; yet who can deny his having been strengthened by these means in good purposes? who can deny that he has been roused to zeal and perseverance in goodness, that he has been made happy in the sentiment of his good christian dispositions, in the comforts of his conscience, in the assurance of divine approbation and favour, has had a foretaste of the blessed reward of his fidelity, and thence acquired fresh courage and resolution which take possession of him, animate him to complete the course he has commenced, to hold out with confidence, and to allow nothing to deprive him of the prize appointed for him that overcomes?

Yes, it is indisputable, that public and social worship throws the most salutary impediments in the way of wickedness and vice, and prevents a thousand disorders in human society ; it is not to be denied, that it animates the true christian to more strenuous efforts in goodness and virtue, and keeps him from becoming weary and disheartened in integrity and beneficence. And what great advantages are these !

How much tranquillity and comfort does it likewise diffuse over the hearts of men ! how many anxious cares, how many consuming vexations, does it moderate or remove ! how differently do they there learn to judge of the world, and their own concerns ! Their ideas of what are usually termed success and misfortune are totally changed. With how much more patience and composure do they learn to bear afflictions ! how much more confidently to trust in God in the
midst

midst of want and misery ! how much more undismayed do they meet danger and death, when all these things appear to them in the light of Religion and Christianity, when they have learnt to consider them in their dependency on the will of the all-wise and all-gracious Ruler of the world, and in their connection with human perfection and happiness ! And when forgiveness of sins is there announced to the contrite and returning sinner, the promises of assistance and support held out to the feeble, a better and an eternal life displayed before the wretched, a reward beyond the grave assured to the oppressed and innocent sufferer, what a healing balm, what refreshment and restoration, must this shed into the soul of them that thirst and pant after comfort !

I here address myself to your own experience, ye who in sincerity of heart and good designs frequent the public worship.

Say, my christian brothers and sisters, have ye not often come into the assembly of the worshipers of God, with heavy hearts and troubled minds? has not often a secret pain, a sorrow of soul, attended you thither? have ye not sighed for comfort and repose? and have ye not there often found this comfort and repose? did not the burden that oppressed you, there fall off from your heart? has not a chearful beam proceeded thence, that has inlightened your gloomy path, and shewn you an issue from the labyrinth in which you were perplexed? have ye not often returned home, comforted, strengthened, and revived?—and what well disposed christian has not there rejoiced in the parental love of God, in the fraternal affection of Jesus, in his affinity with God and Jesus, in his destination for a blessed immortality, and his approximation to the mark of his high calling; and, in the enjoyment of these delights, has he not learnt to endure, to despise,

spise, or to forget all the hardships, all the sufferings, all the evils of the present life? Oh, who can recount all the comfort and serenity of spirit that have derived to men from christian worship, all the tears of sorrow and pain which there have ceased to flow, all the chearful and blessed sensations which have there been taught to rise! What a diminution of human misery, what an augmentation of human happiness is apparent on all hands, in cottages, and palaces, among all classes and conditions of men! and what an inestimable value must this confer on public worship in our sight!

Public and social worship acquires likewise, fourthly, a new value, as it kindles and enflames our devotion, and gives more life and dignity to our peculiar method of worship. What is not the solemn and public worship capable of producing, and how much does it often actually produce! how often

often does it inspire even the volatile and giddy with seriousness, the scoffer with reverence, and the insensible and careless with sentiment and reflection ! how readily does it communicate sensations ! how principally the sensations of piety and devotion ! Like an electrical shock, it frequently seizes upon men of the most different minds and opinions, and gives them a sentiment of spiritual life. And, if I attend a worship where prayer, psalmody, the discourse of the minister, all combine to impress me with pious sentiments and reflections ; where a profound silence, general and continued attention prevails around me, draws off my mind by degrees from all outward things, and fixes my whole spirit on itself and God ; when I there perceive my friends and acquaintance, or even unknown persons, of each age, each sex, and each condition, impressed with devout emotions ; when I join there a great assembly, a whole congregation, humbly prostrate before the
Being

Being who dwells in heaven, and who fills with his majesty both heaven and earth, imploring him for grace and mercy with one consent; when I see them, under a lively sense of their weakness and their manifold spiritual wants, open their hearts and minds to the influence of christianity and religion, and with eagerness of soul imbibe consolation and repose, and power to goodness; when I hear them celebrate the praises of the All-bountiful and All-wise for their existence and his goodness to them, rejoice in their connection with him, and renew their vows of fidelity and obedience; what an impression must it make upon me! how forcibly must I then feel my own imbecillity, my entire dependance on that sovereign spirit! how intimately feel his presence! how feel myself penetrated with reverence, with love towards him, with submission to his will, with confidence in him, with joy at all the instances of his mercy! how important must religion appear

pear to me ! how light and chearful must I there find myself, humbling myself in the dust, with all my brethren and sisters, high and low, rich and poor, in the presence of our common Creator and Father, adoring his infinite greatness, and drawing life and happiness from his sufficiency ! and must not this quickening, this inflaming of piety, though it should not be always excited thus much, nay though it were always in a degree far inferior to this, must it not give a great value to public and social worship ?

What a value, in short, must it receive likewise from this : that the sentiment of the natural equality of mankind, and their affinity to each other, is maintained and invigorated thereby, that they are brought into so close a connection and so intimate a union together by this means ! Every thing that is here transacted and taught reminds us of our common origin, of our
com-

common wants and weaknesses, and our common destination. Every thing that passes here must humble the pride of the great, and inspire courage and confidence into them of low degree; every thing must promote the interests of humanity and love. And what binds men more together than the sameness of faith, and hope, and religious worship? Now we all appear as feeble dependent creatures, as creatures that are in want of instruction, of ability, of support, and assistance, who cannot subsist of themselves; all as frail and sinful men, who seek for mercy and compassion. Here we all humble ourselves before Him who only is wise, only mighty, only great, and to whom all men, all nations, and all worlds, are as nothing. Here we all eat of the same bread, drink of the same cup, and, as the children of one father, all enjoy at one table the repast of christian love. Here the distinction of rank and dignity falls totally away, or meets with

no peculiar regard. We are here, and feel ourselves not as powerful or weak, not as superior or inferior, but as men, as christians; are all subjects, all children of God, all the redeemed and blessed of Jesus; the prince is as the vassal, the rich as the poor, the learned as the ignorant. The prince now hears himself thus addressed: "Thou art like a God upon the earth, but thou wilt die like any child of man. Abuse not thy power, for thou hast a master, a judge, in heaven, with whom there is no respect persons." And the poorest, the lowest of the people, is thus at the same time admonished: "Even thou art formed after the image of thy God, thee too hath Jesus redeemed, and thou art immortal; thee likewise an eternal life awaits; forget not thy dignity, and by a generous and independent conduct shew thyself worthy of thy origin and thy destination."—And a divine service, which may contribute, and actually does contribute so much to our instruction, to
our

our improvement, to our repose, to the exciting and inflaming of our devotion, to the advancement of humanity and brotherly love, must surely possess a great, an inestimable value.

Yes, ever shall be sacred, ever blessed shall ye be of me, ye places consecrated to the worship of God, ye solemn assemblies of his pious adorers upon earth ! With the profoundest reverence, with a thankful and chearful heart will I enter your gates, and celebrate in the midst of you the worthiest, the noblest solemnities that can be performed by mankind on earth. Here will I wholly surrender myself to the sentiment of what God is, and of what he is to me ; and while I fulfill the duties of a worshiper and a child of God, will at the same time enjoy the blessedness of being so. Here will I enter into the closest bands of affection with all who know and love God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and enjoy

enjoy my own felicity and theirs. Here will I seek nourishment for my mind and my heart, deeply imprint every lesson of truth, every word of exhortation, of comfort and peace, that shall be delivered to me, and thence return to my business in the world with invigorated powers, more joyfully discharge every duty of life, and bear every burden of it with more submissive resignation. Here will I take on my pilgrimage, the comforts that refresh and restore my soul; I will consider my way, represent to myself the prize for which I strive, and then with new courage pursue my course. Here will I enjoy in foretaste the blessedness of that better world, where I shall be surrounded by a purer emanation of day, where my faith shall be changed into sight, where I shall celebrate his praises who liveth for ever and ever, with the just made perfect, with spirits of a superior order.

These must be the sentiments with which you are impressed by the consideration of the great importance of social and public worship; these the dispositions and views in which you must frequent them; this the generous fruit you will gather from it. So will it constantly become more estimable, more delightful to you, never be irksome or unpleasant, and will procure you never-ending felicity and bliss.

These must be the sentiments with which you are inspired by the consideration of the great importance of social and public worship; that the dispositions and views in which you must frequent them; that the generous spirit you will gather from it. So will it constantly become more estimable, more delightful to you, never be irksome or unpleasant, and will procure you never-ending felicity and bliss.

E S T I M A T E XXII.

THE
V A L U E
O F
S O L I T U D E.

And immediately the spirit driveth him into the
wilderness. Mark i. 12.

ESTIMATE XXII

THE

VALUE

OF

SOLITUDINE

And immediately the light directly into the
world.

THE

OF

THE

V A L U E

OF

S O L I T U D E.

CONVERSE with mankind, and converse with oneself; the gaieties of social, and the seriousness of solitary life; diffusive, beneficent activity among many, and the application of one's whole attention on oneself; vivacity in business and vivacity in reflection; noise and silence; dissipation and recollection; are always to be interchangeably followed, if we would attain the true end of our being, discharge all our duties, and arrive at a certain degree of wisdom and virtue. If we confine

our existence to either sort exclusively of the other, we shall neglect either our own most important concerns, or the concerns of our brethren. In the uninterrupted bustle of business and dissipation, we may easily forget ourselves; and by too severe a pursuit of solitary silence, we may as easily become indifferent and insensible to others. But, if we combine them both together, we shall live as much for others as for ourselves, promote our own felicity no less than that of other men, with all our powers, and shall neither be seduced to folly by levity and habitual distraction, nor to misanthropy by the gloomy and querulous austerity of the recluse. Two side-ways, Sirs, by which too many have missed of the proper end of their being, and still mistake it, with only this difference, that now the one and then the other has been more thronged and frequented. At present, at least in our regions of the world, those times are past,

5

when

when the solitary life, devoted to meditation, was so highly esteemed, and a total seclusion from the world was thought the sole means of access to heaven. Now the opposite path is more universally trod: company is all things; and silence and retirement are fallen, with the majority, into evil report. But whether they merit this report? whether, under proper limitations, they still are not worthy of the use and esteem of the sage and the christian? whether we have not cause, in this article likewise, to imitate our Saviour Jesus, and like him to be led of the spirit, to be led by the sentiment of our spiritual wants, into the wilderness, or into retirement? This is what we shall now endeavour to discuss.

By the solitude I would recommend, I mean not a life passed in seclusion from all commerce with the world, and all intercourse with mankind, not the life of the

cœnobite, nor that of the hermit. Such a life is plainly in opposition to the destination and felicity of man, and is mostly adapted to the feeble, such as are borne down by the burden of misfortunes, and rendered unfit for the business and joys of social life by habitual misery. And he who thinks to serve God by such a life, or to promote the salvation of his soul, neither knows God, nor understands what the term of saving his soul implies, and cannot be acquitted of the charge of superstition. No, to serve God is, from love and obedience to him, to serve his creatures of the human race, and to fulfill all the duties of life; and the saving of his soul consists in the application of all his faculties and powers to do the will of his Creator; and by the best and most useful means to effect as much good with them as he always is able.

No; the solitude I mean is every place, every retreat, where a man, for a longer

or

or a shorter time; is alone and apart from the company of other men, that he may be free to make reflections on himself, and his important concerns, whether it be a small room in his own house, or in the spacious and open plains in the blaze of the mid-day sun, or by the light of the moon's milder beam. Neither darkness nor confinement, but silence and freedom from such matters, and absence of such persons, as may interrupt or disturb our thoughts, is the essence of solitude. The more ample however the sphere of our sight and sentiment; the farther our eyes can reach; the freer our breast may respire; the more our heart has liberty to contain, and the more unimpeded it is allowed to expand; so much more productive is solitude in great, and generous, and pious reflections and feelings; so much the more likely is it to be and to procure us what it is ordained to be and to procure. Even the presence of a like-disposed spirit
with

with ours, of a heart pursuing and loving such objects as our own, is frequently, not only no hindrance, but rather an advantage to it. To such a solitude we ascribe great worth, and benefit of various kinds.

In solitude our thoughts are more undisturbed and free, and thought is the great prerogative of man, the foundation of his perfection, and the ground of his felicity. In society, and in the midst of our affairs, it frequently happens, that, in this respect, we are more passive than active. We must take the impression of outward things, as they fall upon us; our representations will be exactly modelled on what surrounds us, on whatever we see and hear, on what we have to do. They commonly glide away from before us as quickly as they appear; one presses upon the other; their impetuosity carries us with them. But seldom can we chuse from among them; but seldom can we stop such as are agreeable and

and important; and seldom can we dismiss such as promise us neither profit nor pleasure; but seldom can we distinguish between truth and falsehood, between reality and appearance. We collect too many materials for thought, to be able to give them our mental application in all its force.

When we enter into retirement; when we pass into solitude; we are then, in regard of thought, more active than passive. We act more from ourselves, and by our own proper force, than allow other things to act upon us. Our attention is less interrupted, is more consistent and strong. We may select from among the objects of our reflection; and tarry as long as we will with those that, in present circumstances, are most profitable and pleasant; consider them on more sides than one, in more than one connection; compare them with our farther insights, with our other thoughts; apply them with greater composure to ourselves;

imprint

imprint them deeper in our memory and our heart; and entertain them so long and in such various ways, till they diffuse a pure light upon our minds, and a genial warmth into our hearts, and are thus become so striking, that they cannot be forgotten. So may we, by silent, solitary reflection, extend or rectify some religious idea, or unravel some difficulties which perplexed our spirit on the theatre of the world, or quiet our troubles and cares by a clearer conception of their causes, and the best means of appeasing them, or collect new forces for the performance of duty, and for proceeding on the way of perfection, or even, by more attentively considering our worldly affairs and concerns, learn more wisdom and prudence for carrying them on. At all events, we exercise and strengthen our mental powers; many obscurities that render our path hard to pursue, disperse and retire; and we return, with more cheerfulness and content, to
busy

busy or social life. The sphere of our sight becomes enlarged by reflection; we have learnt to survey more objects, and to connect them together; we carry with us a clearer sight, a juster judgement, and firmer principles, into the world wherein we live and act; and are then likewise able so much the longer to fasten our attention from various distractions, and to think and determine more rightly, in proportion as we have kept our thinking principles in exercise during the hours of retirement.

In the silence of solitude, we have, secondly, an inward consciousness of ourselves, of our existence, our faculties, and our proper dignity. How often and how easily do we forget ourselves in the tumult of affairs, in the turbulence of company, in the vortex of a busy life! How apt are we there to exist more in others than in ourselves, to esteem far more the judgements and approbation of
2 others,

others, than the judgement and approbation of our own hearts, take far more pains to gratify others than to satisfy ourselves, rejoice much more in being thought wise and good, rich and great, by others, than in the intimate conviction that we intrinsically are so ! But, the more a man lives in public, the less does he live and exist to himself : the less frequently and less perfectly does he enjoy his own life ; the more does it slide away like a dream ; and the more easily will he be deceived by every error and appearance that offers.

But, in solitude, Sirs, our spirit, as it were, returns home ; there she collects her scattered forces, and unites them all in the contexture of her being. There we wake, as it were, from a dream ; there we discern ourselves from all that is not with us. There we separate our very thoughts from that which thinketh in us, there we acutely feel, that we are, that we live, that we think,
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that we are rational, free, self-acting creatures, capable of great things, and that we are immortal. And what a blessed sentiment is this ! It is the joyful sentiment of one awakened out of sleep, whose senses had been fast locked up, who had lost all consciousness and voluntary movement, and now opens his eyes to the clear light of day, is sensible to his internal faculties, exerts them freely and with perspicuous consciousness, and, penetrated with these delicious sensations, praises his great preserver, that he still exists and lives, and can in spirit exalt himself to him !

How much nobler, how much more blessed is this sentiment of what we are and are capable of, than the imposing survey of our face in a mirror, our gaudy apparel, our outward circumstances, our riches, our borrowed beauties and prerogatives, which so frequently transports us away from ourselves, and allows us not to discern
what

what actually belongs to our proper being, what gives us our true worth and dignity, from among the multitude of things to which we falsely attribute them ! And when, in the solemn hour of solitude, the sentiment of self is quick within us ; when the dazzling glare of what are foreign to us, what are for but a short period connected with us, vanishes from before our eyes ; when our spirit, as it were, descends into the deepest recesses of its existence ; what capacities, what powers, what aptitude to higher perfection and happiness, does it not discover in itself ! with what a lively sentiment is it then convinced, that its present state is not the compleatest mode of its existence, not the ultimate end of its being ; that is not, here, and cannot be, all that it might be, and may become ; that a faculty dwells within it, constantly embracing more, and constantly aiming at remoter things, which is ever struggling to burst its narrow limits, and to produce,
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In other circumstances, in other connections with the visible and with the spiritual world, totally different effects, and to procure for itself the enjoyment of quite other satisfactions and fruitions! And what a glorious presentiment is this! what views it opens of everlasting being, and of everlasting progress! Yes, then does a man truly rejoice in his existence and his life; rejoice in them far more than in all the externals his property consists in; feels his entire worth, his inherent dignity, feels what he may undertake and perform; and feels himself sufficiently strong to sustain every duty of life, to endure its afflictions and hardships, to bear every privation of outward things, and to quit this life itself, the first step of his existence, without reluctance, and press forward, with resolution and ardour, into the superior life.

In the silence of solitude, we not only acquire and maintain an inward conscious-

ness of ourselves in general, but we learn likewise, thirdly, to know ourselves, and particularly our failings and infirmities, far better than in the tumult of society. By what a number of causes in social life is this salutary knowledge of ourselves impeded! Here are multifarious and intricate affairs; there alluring diversions and fascinating pleasures, which draw off our whole attention from ourselves, and fix it altogether on externals. Here we meet with flatterers, who, from interested views or from weakness and exuberant complaisance, pronounce us to be better than we are; there partial judges, who think to excuse their own faults and delinquencies by justifying ours. Here are courtly, and there friendly testimonies, which bias our judgement of ourselves and our actions: here are prescriptive principles and prevailing customs; there dazzling examples, which prevent us from inspecting

inspecting and feeling our failings and defects.

No sooner do we go into silence, no sooner do we enter the sanctuary of solitude, and give the rein to our own reflections and sentiments, but the deceits of self-love are dispersed like the morning clouds. The attention is fixed on ourselves: the flatterer holds his peace: no partial or corrupted judge, no civil friend takes our judgement by surprize: the force of example is weakened or evaded: the common excuses lose the whole of their weight. A man confides more to himself, investigates closer, scrutinizes deeper, tries himself upon sounder principles, and pronounces more impartially on the value of himself and his actions. There he will neither be led into error by the dread of betraying himself before others, nor by the hope of obtaining from them a more advantageous opinion of him. There personal love gives

way to the rational regard for oneself. There nothing is more natural than for a man to ask his own heart: "Am I really that for which I am taken?" The wise, the virtuous, the upright, the beneficent, the well disposed, the useful man, for which I am given out by my friends? have I done so much good, have I performed so much service to society as they ascribe to me? am I actually exempt from those failings, which I know how to conceal in society, and from which I am thought to be free? are these failings so insignificant, are they so unavoidable, so inseparable from human infirmity, as they are said to be? can I reflect on myself and on my moral condition with as much complacency, and be as satisfied with myself and my conduct, when I am not disturbed in my thoughts or beguiled in my researches, when I am flattered by no man, when I consider what I am and what I do, in the clear light of truth, before the eyes of him who seeth
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in secret? Oh, how differently do we appear to ourselves, how many weak places in our heart, how many infractions in our virtue, how many defects in our best dispositions and actions, do we not then perceive, which we almost always overlook in the ordinary dissipation of our lives, or only discern them, as it were, in their shadows! And must not such discoveries as these be of inestimable moment to us, must they not render solitude, which enables us to make them, delightful to us?

But solitude must become still dearer to us, if we consider, in the fourth place, that we there get a more lively perception of the being of God and his nearness, than it is possible for us in other circumstances to acquire. Indeed he is every where present, he pervades and animates all, he works in all and by all; and the sentiment of him never absolutely forsakes the wise man and the christian, even in the noise

and hurry of a busy life. He has the Lord alway before him, and walks continually in his presence. But how frequently will this greatest, this most blessed of all considerations, be obscured by the unavoidable distractions and affairs which call and fix our whole attention upon them ! how seldom can we sufficiently maintain their dignity and their duration ! how often do they appear in a feeble, transient gleam, or more like the cold, unfruitful light of the moon, than the strong beams of the sun, warming, invigorating, illuminating, and enlivening nature !

No, only in the silence of solitude, only in those solemn hours and moments, when all around us is still, when we hear nothing in nature but the voice of God, nothing but the voice of God in our hearts, and the voice of God in his word, only there do we learn to observe the revelations of God within us and without us, see ourselves

selves surrounded with the productions of his power and goodness, and cordially feel that he is not far from every one of us, that he is all things in all. There our reflections are perspicuous and certain : if I be, then God is ; if I be and operate here, then God is and operates here, by whom I subsist and live. Am I encompassed by creatures all around me, by beauties, by blessings and powers ? Then am I encompassed all around by God, the father of these creatures, the source of these beauties and powers, the giver and preserver of these bounties. Where force, where motion, where life, where intelligence, where freedom and activity is, there is God, there he reveals himself, there he acts ! How nigh, how inexpressibly nigh then must he be to me, and to every thing that is, and lives, and thinks, and moves ! What can I be, and think, and will, and do, and enjoy, that does not afford me a demonstration of the existence and the presence of

God, without whom nothing is and nothing will be, nothing can be done, and nothing happen? No, I have no need to soar into the heights of heaven, to search for him, the omnipresent, nor to dive into the abysses of the deep, neither to look for him in the splendor of the sun, nor in the darkness of the night, neither through the boundless regions of the sky nor in the temples of his votaries, neither in this nor in that peculiar spot of his immeasurable domain; he is both in the height and in the depth, in the splendor of the sun and in the obscurity of night, among the hymning choirs of superior spirits, and in the midst of his worshipers on earth; he is here and at the same time there, in me and in each of his creatures, is over all, and equally great over all, equally powerful, equally good, over all perfection, and even love itself! Nothing can conceal me from his inspection, nothing deprive me of his

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vivifying and blessing influence, nothing of his paternal tenderness ; nothing remove and part me from him, without whom I should not be, and without whose power and will I could not continue for a moment !— And now when these thoughts are strong and vigorous in me ; when I thus feel the nearness of my God, my creator and father ; feel that I live and move and am in him ; what a light must then diffuse itself around upon all things, what a brightness in my spirit ! What are the cares and what the troubles that will not then vanish away ! what strife of the passions will not then subside ! what tumult not sink into peace ! what hopes, what assurance, what joy will not animate and pervade my frame ! what foretaste not bless me of purer and everlasting pleasure ! And shall not the solitude that promises and procures me such advantages be dear and charming to me ?

O solemn

O solemn silence, hail! Hail, O sacred solitude! sacred to wisdom, to self-possession, and supernal joys, sacred to the complacency of God; ever be thou blessed of me, ever let me find thee the restorative, the comfort, the solace of my soul! Let me repose upon thy bosom, when stunned with the noise of the world and weary of its pleasures, I am only alive to my spiritual wants! Oh, shed thy mild reviving influence upon me, when I feel the weariness of the traveller, overtaken by night, while yet a great way from the place he endeavoured to reach, or has had the misfortune to stray from his path! Shield me from the derision of the vain, from the unmerited scorn and the uncharitable judgement of the envious man, from the lowering aspect of folly, of guilt, and misery, which often disfigures the scene of busy and social life! Be thou my sanctuary and hiding place from the hostile attacks of infidelity and doubt; dart light around me
when

when my path is obscure ; appease my swelling heart, abate the rage of low tumultuous passions, establish serenity in my breast ; give me to feel the intimate presence of my Creator and Father, to taste the ravishing joys of exalted devotion, and be to me the gate of heaven !

But, wouldst thou, my friend and brother, wouldst thou that solitude should be and procure to thee what it is and procures to the sage and the christian ? Then let the following maxims of prudence be thy guide in the use of it.

Seek not solitude, from disgust or misanthropy ; not that thou may'st give freer scope to thy fullen and gloomy reflections, or the furious sallies of thy wounded pride, thy sickened vanity ; not for breaking forth in sad complaints, or for fostering some secret sorrow, or some unbridled passion ; not for withdrawing thyself from thy brethren,

thren, for dissolving thy intercourse with them, and depriving them, as unworthy, of thy services and converse. No; this were to profane the solemnities of retirement, a criminal abuse of so excellent a means of improving and calming thy heart, and every folly thou committest there; every depraved sentiment or sensation thou indulgest there, will so much the more degrade thee, as it was the more easy for thee to vanquish or avoid it.

Seek not solitude, when thy duty, the duty of thy station and calling requires thy attendance in active life, when thy friend, thy brother, is in need of thy help and support, when thou mayest perform something useful to society. To do good is always better than to think well: useful employment better than the loftiest repose; a magnanimous sacrifice for the benefit of others is more meritorious than the noblest sentiments. Beware then of preferring
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the pleasures of solitude, innocent and respectable as they are, to the pleasures of beneficence, and, under the pretence of promoting thy own internal perfection, to neglect the advancement of human felicity.

Seek not solitude, in the third place, as a punishment thou inflictest on thyself, as a penance for thy numberless dissipations and amusements. By this means it will soon become burdensome to thee. By this means it cannot be useful or agreeable to thee, and the oppressive languor that haunts thee there will soon lay thee open to every foolish and dangerous dissipation and pleasure, that bids fair to free thee from this hateful incumbrance. No; the sentiment of thy spiritual wants, the sentiment of thy superior vocation, the eager desire of becoming wiser and better, and of having more communion with God, must force thee into retirement, and must direct thy thoughts and thy employment when
thou

thou art there. It must be the nourishment of thy spirit, and the recreation of thy heart, the soother of thy cares, the reward of thy industry and fidelity in thy calling, thy refreshment after wearisome assiduity, and thy preparative and strengthener to every fresh exertion requisite to thy station in life.

If in these views thou enterest the retirement of thy closet, or the solitude of the grove, then let thy thoughts and sentiments flow unrepressed, so long as they are innocent and good, proportionate to thy present temper of mind, and thy immediate necessities. Lay no restraint upon them, unless particular purposes and certain things require it. Let thy self sentiment, the clear internal consciousness of what thou art and doest, be active in thee; hide thee not from thyself: drive back no sentiment or thought because it is strange or uncommon to thee; let thy mind exert
itself

itself in all its vigour without controul. The more freely, naturally and calmly thou thinkest and feelest ; the readier will the depths of thy heart disclose themselves to thee ; truth will shine upon thee with a brighter beam ; and the farther advances wilt thou make in self-knowledge, in wisdom, and virtue.

And quit not thy retreat till thou canst carry with thee some good and lucid thoughts, some noble, pious sentiment, some virtuous purpose, or some ground of comfort into social and active life. Retirement must be to thee no ultimate end, but only a means to higher aims. Let not thy frequentation of solitude make thee gloomy and querulous, discouraged in goodness, sullen, or unsocial, not render thee shy and unfriendly to man. Return to thy brethren with an open countenance, a chearful heart, and with firmer affection ; and then apply the force thou hast col-

lected, the illumination thou hast obtained, the peace thou hast re-established within thee, the satisfaction and hopes thou hast confirmed, the sentiment of the divine presence and nearness wherewith thou hast filled thy heart! apply all these to the more ready and chearful prosecution of thy business, to greater circumspection in thy conduct, to a happier enjoyment of the bounties of thy God, apply it to the benefit of mankind and the advancement of human felicity. Proceed on thy way towards the mark of the prize of thy high calling, which now shines brighter before thee; proceed undismayed and firm, and practise, as thou goest, what thou hast learnt in this school of wisdom and virtue. So wilt thou completely fulfill thy vocation, and neither be slothful and idle in solitude, nor trifling and negligent in the hurry of the world.

E S T I M A T E XXIII.

THE
V A L U E
OF
S O C I A L L I F E.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools,
but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days
are evil. Ephes. v. 15, 16.

VOL. III.

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THERE are in the world things known to every one, esteemed, admired, and used, and in the use of which every person finds pleasure and profit, to the use of which therefore none needs excitation or encouragement; and yet which require a certain recommendation to make a man perceive their true value, use them in the best manner, and obtain as much pleasure and profit from them as they are calculated to afford. Of this kind, undoubtedly, is social life. Who does not know and feel

that man is ordained to converse with his brethren, to impart to them what he is and has, to the interchange of his reflections and sentiments with theirs? who has not tasted the pleasures and joys of social life, and been charmed with the sweets of them? who does not prefer it to absolute and constant solitude? Therefore who does not find in himself sufficient impulse to the use and enjoyment of it? How seldom is it necessary, comparatively speaking, to caution our acquaintance against too strong a propensity to retirement, or to exhort them to go into company, in the ordinary sense of the word! how much more easily, and how much more frequently, upon the whole, do we run into this extreme than into the other!

But whether this tendency to society is and procures us all that it might be and procure? whether we do not prize and affect it, merely from blind impulse, merely
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to fly from ourselves, or merely for following the prevailing fashion, or whether on plain and acknowledged principles? whether we know and feel what it is that gives it its real value? and whether it is of that value to us, and affords us all those satisfactions and advantages, which we seek and expect from it? These are matters whereon, notwithstanding the universally strong propensity to social life, perhaps the majority of people never consider, and in regard whereof they are probably the least able to give a satisfactory account. Man is a social animal, as he naturally possesses dispositions and capacities for society, and finds pleasure in it; as he hears society celebrated, and readily complies with the fashion, which prevails at certain times and among particular people. But, whether he be social in the best manner to a wise and virtuous man, in the most reputable way for a christian, and reaps from his sociable turn the greatest utility possible,

the most harmless and most noble pleasures, about this he seldom concerns himself; and hence it is that this very instinct is so often a burthen, even to its admirers and such as magnify it most, and so seldom comes up to their expectations. My design at present is to give some assistance to your reflections on sociableness, for forming a right judgement, and making a better use of it.

We will investigate together

The value of social life.

For more accurately stating it, we shall have two questions to answer.

The first is: How must social life be framed, if we would have it of a certain value?

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The other : What gives it this value ?
or, Wherein does the value of it consist ?

These investigations will teach us how we are to walk circumspectly, according to the apostolical exhortation, and not to behave as fools in regard of social life, but as wise, adapting ourselves to times or circumstances, and making the best use of both.

Sociableness is always better than unsociableness. An imperfect use of this natural impulse, or this propensity founded on education, and rendered productive by intercourse, is better than the total disuse of it. But all sociableness is not rational and christian, every kind of social life is not of great value. Neither all sociableness nor every kind of social life is able to procure us lasting advantage and real pleasure. Principally, by the removal and avoidance of many wants and imperfections ; principally by the introduction and

the united activity of many good properties and virtues, does social life become and occasion what it may and ought ; by this means does it principally acquire that value which renders it worthy of our high esteem and participation. And what are then the good properties, the virtues, we are to bring with us into social life, and exert therein ; what the faults we have to avoid, if we would have it of great value to us ?

Honesty and openness of heart is the first good property, the first virtue we must introduce with us, and exercise in social life ; to be destitute of all restraint and all circumspection, is, on the other hand, the first fault we must avoid, and therewith the grossness which is its inseparable attendant. To be sociable, implies the communicating of our thoughts, our sentiments, our feelings, and views to each other, to compare them together, to barter them for others,

others, and to rectify and ennoble them by those of other men. Would you have this to be done, Sirs? Then must truth be in your discourses, in your gestures, in your looks, in the tone of your voice, and in all your person and behaviour; then must you actually think and feel what you represent as your thoughts and feelings, and be in fact what you would endeavour to pass for; then must you not lock up your thoughts within your own breasts, and not reject every reflection and sentiment, every opinion which is not yet marked with the stamp of the mode, or the prevailing fashion of the day, and is not thoroughly and universally current; then must you not sedulously strive to conceal yourself from others; not torment yourself with a thoughtfulness that kills all the life and all the energy of speech, at every word you utter, every sentiment that arises in your breast, every feature of your face, every gesture of your body, as if you were afraid
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of betraying the true state of your soul; then must you neither regard social life as an intercourse of impostures, nor use it as a school of dissimulation.—This would not be making a fair and honourable exchange of what we are and have, but carrying on a cunning and fraudulent imposition upon others, by pretending to be what we are not, and to have what we do not possess. By this means social life would be turned into a low farce; and what value could it then be of to thinking and sensible men?

Beware, however, of imagining that honesty and openness of heart is incompatible with circumspection and prudence. Though you communicate freely and honestly with others, you have no need on that account to repose a blind confidence in all you meet; not to disclose to every one the inmost thoughts and sentiments of your heart. Though you do not dissemble, do not give yourself out for better than you are, you
are

are not therefore obliged unnecessarily to reveal all your infirmities and failings. Though you do not speak otherwise than as you think [and feel, you need not therefore directly tell every one whatever you think and whatever you feel. Though you shun all the anxiety of excessive thoughtfulness about whatever you speak and do, yet you need not speak and act without care and circumspection. Otherwise you will injure many, be an offence to others, make numbers of weak but well-intentioned men keep away from you, prevent many good designs, but not yet ripe for execution, from coming to effect, cause the truth to be suspected which is not comprehensible to every one, and render your expressions of sentiment contemptible by an ill-timed display of them. Your frankness will become folly, and your sincerity degenerate into rudeness.

The

The use of a generous freedom is another good property, another virtue, which we must take with us and display in social life; absolute licentiousness and effrontery, on the other hand, is another fault we must avoid. Would you run no risk of finding social life burdensome to you? would you have it to be not so much labour and toil as refreshment and recreation? Then, by all means, you must breathe freely, judge freely, and act freely; you must boldly follow your own innocent humour, and your irreproachable inclinations; you must not be afraid of appearing what you are, and of doing what you find agreeable; you must not think yourself bound to comply with the self-conceit and the humour of others, model yourself by other persons in all things, and merely say what others have said and done, nothing but what has been heretofore received and is handed down, or what every one says and does. This would be introducing an insipid monotony

notony and an oppressive languor into social life.

But, on the other side, if you would have it as little burdensome and disagreeable to your company as to yourself ; then you must not attempt to preside alone ; not constantly be giving the rule, not always endeavouring to arrange and controul the pleasures, the affairs, and the connections of others ; you must allow others the same liberty you use yourself, and they allow ; make them the same little sacrifices of complaisance and indulgence which they at other times make you ; and therefore interchangeably direct and obey, now follow others, and then be followed. In short, you must set bounds to the use of your freedom, whenever it would be injurious to others, or they might reasonably take offence at it, particularly whenever it might have a tendency to lead the younger members of society into error or sin. The unlimited

limited use of one's liberty in social intercourse is criminal licentiousness, is actual tyranny, and disgusting arrogance.

Graceful, polite, and agreeable manners are a third requisite which we must carry into social life, and attend to the observance of; artificial constraint, on the contrary, and a stiff and formal carriage, is a third fault we are to avoid; and even the christian, who in every respect may be the completest and the best of men, must not imagine that matters of this kind are indifferent to him, or unworthy of his attention. To be agreeable to others, and even to please by the exterior, is a purpose of social life, and one of the principal sources of the pleasures it procures us. The eye there must not be hurt with any thing repugnant and shocking in mien, gestures, or in raiment; no harsh, discordant, shrieking tones must grate upon the ear; the taste for the beautiful must be preserved and

and delighted, by the natural, the becoming, the proper, the captivating, in the figure, the posture, the garments, and the whole demeanor. Would you then attain and promote these views? Then adorn your person, but do not disguise it by borrowed and meretricious ornaments: follow the fashion so far as is consistent with propriety and a cultivated taste; but do not run into the extravagant or ridiculous: let a graceful ease and a noble freedom, not an artificial formality, a childish levity, or an offensive ferocity, be the rule of your movements and outward appearance. Let the tone of your voice be natural, modulated, and soft, and suited to the subject of your discourse, but so as not to become indifferent by an excessive modesty, or disgusting by an affected modulation: study to acquire elegant and complacent manners, but let them be *your own*, and not a close, servile, and thereby a ridiculous imitation of extraneous manners. Whatever relates

to presentation and outward address must not be the effect of affectation and artifice, but a genuine result of an inward sense of the beautiful and becoming, and receive animation from that sentiment alone; and even the outward deportment, the very garb of wisdom and virtue, must give a lustre to intrinsic worth, and thus render it more amiable and striking.

Benevolence and philanthropy is a fourth good property, a fourth virtue, which we must carry with us and display in social life; coldness, indifference, and jealousy, on the contrary, or flattery and affected sensibility, compose a fourth class of the faults we must there avoid. And, indeed, would you receive pleasure from the countenance of your brethren, and from your conversation with them; then must you enjoy their welfare, and be delighted with their good fortune: otherwise every better quality you perceive in

in them, every mark of approbation conferred on them by others, every praise they obtain, must give you uneasiness. Would you have your intercourse with them not irksome or painful, would you support it with pleasure ; then must you take part in all that relates to them ; you must not be indifferent to whatever befalls them, whether good or bad ; then must you rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Would you procure sustenance and employment for your heart by your converse with others ; then must you expand it to the feelings of humanity and friendship ; then must you let it be animated by correspondent estimation and love ; then must self-interest, self-love, and misanthropy be eradicated from it. Coldness, indifferency, insensibility, jealousy, and hatred, are the death of all social pleasures ; are what constantly, more or less, impair and weaken these satisfactions, and

are the causes that disgust, displeasure and languor so often prevail in company.

But in avoiding these mistakes, take care not to boast of dispositions which are foreign to you, or to testify a sensibility which you do not possess. Seek not to compensate the defects of your benevolence and affection by the base arts of flattery. Do not put on the semblances of gladness or sorrow, while your heart is insensible to both the one and the other. Approach not those with pretended friendship, from whom your heart is far removed. Force not the tears of compassion, or complacency, or of tenderness, from your eyes. Be not lavish in particular protestations of friendship to any man that is not the friend of your soul, and the confident of your heart. But rarely can artifice conceal the defects of nature and the want of truth; and the generality of persons would rather you let your coldness appear, than be duped

duped by the semblance of a cordial concern. Would you avoid these errors ; then be Christians, for the Christian is animated by unfeigned love ; that is the prime motive of all he thinks, and speaks, and does.

Affability is a fifth good quality, which we must bring and employ in social life. Talkativeness, on the contrary, is a fifth failing which we must avoid. The affable man entertains, but the loquacious confounds. The former speaks with reflection, and selects the most profitable and agreeable from what he has to say : the latter delivers every thing that comes into his mind without consideration or choice, and shakes out his wallet of good things and bad, proper and improper, windy conceits and stupid dreams, in every man's face he meets. The former actually converses with others, and hearkens when they speak with the same attention he, in his turn, requires from them : the latter is

constantly speaking, never has time to hear, and his perpetual torrent of words rushes over all, like a deluge, deprives the intelligent of the desire and the opportunity to speak, and both the wise and the unwise of all power to hear. The former, in short, knows the fit time for holding his tongue, and is not ashamed of his silence: the other had rather have recourse to idle reports, or slander, or lies, than allow himself to be robbed of the imaginary honour of possessing an inexhaustible fund of entertainment.

Strive therefore to maintain and heighten the pleasures of society by a rational and discreet affability; but do not heedlessly spoil them by loquacity. Learn to hear as well as to speak. Distinguish yourself more by the truth, the justness, the moral goodness of what you say, by the delicacy of your remarks, and the fit manner in which you display them, than by the redundant
verbosity,

verbosity, and stupifying vehemence of your speech. Let your discourses be seasoned with salt, according to the precept of the apostle; let them be ever inoffensive, conducive to edification, and constantly so ordered, that the claims of truth, of virtue, of religion, and christianity, be not infringed. Be not distressed in those moments when the vivacity of conversation gives place to profound silence, frequently unavoidable, and often so salutary to the support and improvement of reflection. Rather submit to the reproach of unsociableness, or of poverty in materials of entertainment, than escape this reproach at the expence of truth or philanthropy, virtue or decorum.

Chearfulness, harmless, temperate cheerfulness, is a sixth good quality which we must carry with us into social life, and put in practice there; dissolute mirth, on the other hand, and extravagant jollity, is

a sixth fault we have to avoid, The former, cheerfulness, recreates and strengthens both the health of the mind and that of the body ; it is really salutary to both ; is therefore worthy of the sage and the christian, and gives to every thing that is spoken or transacted an agreeable aspect and a heightened value : the other, dissolute mirth, enervates and perplexes the spirit, frequently distorts the body, commonly debases the character, excludes every finer and more generous satisfaction, corrupts the taste, and leaves nothing behind but confusion and wild uproar.

Avoid these faults, and acquire these good qualities, if you would give and receive much real pleasure in social life. Let serenity accompany you in the society of your brethren ; let gaiety and gladness animate you there ; let inoffensive wit and harmless raillery season your discourse ; enjoy allowable and innoxious mirth ; but
enjoy

enjoy them with prudent moderation. Beware of every thing that confounds your reason, that deprives you of the consciousness of yourself, and the respect that is due to others, of every thing that distresses others or degrades them in their own eyes, from every thing that is in opposition to the dignity of the man and the christian. Rejoice in the Lord always; that is, constantly so as becomes a christian. Only that cheerfulness which is consistent with the thoughts of God and your duty, and which you will reflect upon with pleasure in the silence of retirement, or at least in your hours of solitary meditation, will not be a cause of regret; only this cheerfulness must be thought reasonable, sought after, enjoyed, and maintained with all your care.

If we take with us these good qualities, these virtues, into social life, and support them there, at the same time avoiding their opposite defects; if therefore honesty and

openness of heart, but not indiscretion and rudeness; generous freedom, but not licentiousness and arrogance; graceful, refined, and agreeable manners, but not foppery, affectation, and formality; benevolence and philanthropy, not coldness and jealousy, or flattery and artificial sensibility; affability, but not loquaciousness; mirth, but not licentiousness; prevail in social life: then certainly it has a great value, it then will procure us complete and diversified pleasures, solid and lasting advantages. However, for more particularly defining these pleasures and benefits, and for setting them in their proper light, as the matter is so copious, we must discuss them in another discourse. In the mean time, we will just draw a few consequences from what has been already remarked.

We plainly perceive from the foregoing observations, how it happens that society is so often irksome to us; that it so seldom
answers

answers our expectations; that we so frequently go into company, as it were against our will; and much oftener leave it, with hearts dissatisfied, or totally empty. Either you yourself are deficient in these good qualities and virtues, to which social life is indebted for all its value, or you miss them in others. Either you suffer yourself to be overtaken and beguiled by these failings, which enfeeble or destroy these pleasures of society, or you experience the unpleasant effects of them in others. Vigorously strive against these faults, or sedulously avoid them; exert all your endeavours to acquire those good properties and virtues, and exercise yourself in the practice of them more and more; the principal causes of langour and disgust will by this means be certainly banished from your converse with others, and the sources of satisfaction and pleasure will be ever open to you.

Learn

Learn farther from what has been advanced, that, although, to the best use and most solid enjoyment of social life, outward appearance, genteel and agreeable manners, and what is only to be acquired by frequenting polite circles, are very requisite; yet that likewise these things do not constitute all that is necessary thereto, nor even the principal means; but that they for the most part are, or ought to be, the produce of good moral qualities, of real virtues, of christian dispositions, of actual and distinguished merit both of mind and heart. Thence conclude, that he who comes to his brethren with an empty head and a frozen heart, can promise himself neither pleasure nor profit from his intercourse with them, and that he who brings with him no aptitude to innocent and generous satisfactions, can likewise lay no claim to the enjoyment of such satisfactions, and has no right to complain at the want of them.

Forget

Forget not, that the joys and pleasures of social life consist in the mutual interchange and communication of what each person possesses and knows that is eminently beautiful, just, and agreeable; that they depend on a reciprocal giving and receiving; and that he who has nothing, or but little, to give, is only capable of receiving as little, and has no right to require any more. The greater stock, therefore, the more wealth in good thoughts, sentiments, dispositions, different kinds of knowledge, views and agreeablenesses, you take with you, so much the more opportunity and means will you meet with for exchanging your riches for the good things that others possess, and at the same time improve and augment your capital.

Learn, thirdly, from what has been said, that the wise, the virtuous, the real christian, whether in society or solitude, is in
his

his proper place; that he constantly carries about him the most copious sources of pleasure, which he imparts to others and enjoys himself; that, at all events, he runs the least hazard of either doing or suffering wrong, of offending others or of being offended at them; that at all events he is eminently good, and eminently happy; and that he has always the means at hand, in his reflecting mind, his honest heart, and his contented disposition, of rendering very indifferent, and in many respects disagreeable company, pretty tolerable. His exercised understanding finds likewise there more materials for thought, his benevolent and philanthropic heart discovers more of the beautiful and the good, overlooks and excuses more failings and follies, enjoys every pleasure and satisfaction in greater purity and perfection; and his temperate desires, his particular pretensions, are far more easily satisfied, than if he brought with him

him into society an empty head, a drowzy spirit, an austere or envious eye, a misanthropical and dissatisfied heart, or ungoverned desires and proud pretensions.

Learn, lastly, that solitary and social life must be mutually interchanged for each other, if we would receive the greatest possible advantage from both, and that the social alone, without the solitary life, can have no great value. In the quiet of solitude we must qualify ourselves for the joys and pleasures of society. It is there we must learn to think judiciously in the christian sense of the term, if we would here speak rationally and agreeably. We must there collect and adjust the knowledge, acquire the virtues and the good qualities we are here to use, and by which we are to deserve esteem, and approbation and affection. There we must form our taste to the beautiful and good, which we are here to cherish and apply. We must there procure our heart that peace, and fill it with those bene-

benevolent and generous sentiments and dispositions, we find so necessary here, and which afford so much satisfaction and delight both to ourselves and to others. We must there fight against the obstacles and temptations which may here lead us into error or plunge us into guilt. Combine them therefore together, and labour in solitude at the cultivation of your understanding and the improvement of your moral condition, with so much the more zeal, as it is so necessary to you in social life, that you may be so much the more useful and agreeable to others, and that you may reap again in return more profit and joy from your intercourse with them. Yes, believe me, Sirs, wisdom, and virtue, and piety, are, and continue in all places, at all times, in all circumstances, in domestic and in social, as well as in solitary life, the best, the surest guides of man, the most solid ground of his satisfactions, the richest, the only inexhaustible sources of his pleasures and felicity.

ESTIMATE

E S T I M A T E XXIV.

T H E

V A L U E

O F

S O C I A L L I F E.

C O N T I N U E D.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools,
but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days
are evil.

Ephes. v. 15, 16.

T H E

ESTIMATE XXIV

THE

VALUABLE

SOCIAL LIFE

CONTINUED

the fact that the same country, not only
but as well, regarding the time, because the time
is over.

THE

THE
V A L U E
O F
S O C I A L L I F E
C O N T I N U E D.

THAT social life has a certain value, that it is good and desirable, is a matter that no one doubts of; of this our own experience assures us. But how it is to be ordered, what we are to observe, and what avoid therein, if we would render it of great value, and what peculiarly gives it this value, are questions we do not often enough consider, though the solution of

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them is of the utmost importance to us in the use and enjoyment of it. The first of these questions has been answered in the preceding discussion. We there saw what good qualities, what virtues, we are to bring with us into social life, and there employ, and at the same time what the faults we must sedulously avoid, if we would procure ourselves real pleasure and solid advantage from it. It must be, namely, honesty and openness of heart, but not rudeness; generous freedom, but not licentiousness and arrogance; polite, and elegant, and pleasing manners, but not foppishness or formal and constrained behaviour; it must be benevolence and philanthropy, but not coldness and jealousy, not flattery, not artificial sensibility; it must be rational and discreet affability, but not babbling and loquacity; innocent mirth, but not petulance and dissolute merriment; that must prevail in social life, if it be to procure us pleasures no less diversified than

than pure, advantages no less durable than solid.

The questions that still remain to be answered are, what gives this value to social life? wherein does it consist? what is the utility, what are the pleasures it procures us? To reply expressly to these questions is the object of my present discussion. Happily perhaps we may hereby learn more justly to prize, and more circumspectly to use, the riches it possesses, the means of improvement and happiness it offers.

Social life is, first, the most natural and the most ample source of the knowledge of mankind. And, without the knowledge of characters, we can neither be so useful to our brethren nor they to us, as our duty and our common interest require. The sage, who, in the silence of retirement, reflects upon mankind, and at the same time narrowly observes himself, may

certainly make great progress in the science of human nature : he may make acute and just remarks on the capacities and powers of the human spirit, on the procedure and connection of its perceptions, on its present and future ordination, on human passions, prejudices, virtues, and vices ; he may investigate the motives of human actions, and examine the intrinsic worth of their thoughts and deeds. But it is in converse with them, it is in social life, he first will learn to apply the principles and rules by which he judges of mankind, to a thousand particular persons and occurrences, and put their precision to the proof. There will he first learn to judge of the infinite variety and difference of human minds and manners, of human inclinations and characters. There he perceives every feature of human nature diversified and discriminated a thousand ways. sees every faculty of the human soul display itself by a thousand means, every human

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inclination and passion shew itself under the most variegated and dissimilar aspects, and deduce as manifold and heterogeneous effects. There will he find combinations and mixtures of strength and weakness, of wisdom and folly, of good and bad properties, of virtues and failings, which, remote from the actual world, he would scarcely have thought possible. And how much must this extend and rectify his knowledge of mankind! how many phenomena in the moral world will he find it explain! how many mysteries will it unravel, which were inexplicable to him, and which by mere meditation he could never solve!

In society we acquire, not only the knowledge of mankind in general, but we learn to know every particular man of those among whom we live, and with whom we are obliged to converse, our acquaintance, our fellow-citizens, our friends, every per-

son with whom we are connected by business, by office and employment, and by ordinary intercourse. There they, on numberless occasions, discover to us their principles, their prejudices, their errors, their propensities, their passions, their sound and their weak side. There we learn to know the measure of their mental faculties, the sphere of their views, their way of acting, the proportions of their strength and weakness, the avenues to their heart, and the influence which certain persons or things have over it. There we may consequently learn, how far we may reckon upon them, or whether reckon upon them at all, trust ourselves to them or not, what we have and what we have not to expect from them.

And how useful, how necessary to us is this knowledge, if we would neither deal unjustly by ourselves or others, require neither too much nor too little of any, injure

jure none, either by ungrounded distrust, or by too much confidence tempt or perplex him, if we would prosecute our affairs with prudence and success; discharge our duty towards every man by the fittest means, make use of others to promote our designs, and in return contribute our means to the advancement of theirs, afford others the most useful services, and obtain similar services from them! From how many mistakes and transgressions should we be saved by such a knowledge of mankind! how much more speedily and securely, in a hundred cases, should we gain our ends! how much more certainly know where to be firm, and where to yield; when we should go strait forward, and where reach our aim by a circuitous way; what maxims we should here use, and what there, for producing the best effects; how take such a case, how treat such an affair, how deal with such a person, how behave under such an event! with how much greater

ease and safety discharge our duty on one hand, and on the other promote our own lawful and honest designs ! how much more good should we be able to perform, and how much more to enjoy ! And must not then the social life that enables us to acquire this knowledge of mankind be of great value to us ?

Yes, certainly great is its value ! For, at the same time that it improves us in the knowledge of mankind, it in the second place supplies us with the most excellent means of exercising our mental faculties, of enlarging the sphere of our views, of rectifying and bringing into action the knowledge we have already acquired, and of increasing it with new discoveries. If we wish to impart our sentiments on any matter to others, in a manner satisfactory to them ; then we must represent the case at the same time in a more perspicuous method to ourselves, and more precisely discriminate

criminate our conceptions of it, and weigh them apart, than we commonly do when we only consider them by ourselves. If we would hearken to others with intelligence, perfectly understand them, and apprehend their meaning or their judgement on any subject with full conviction, or oppose them with solid reasons : then must we more strenuously exert our attention, and more strictly investigate the matter, than if we determine upon it merely for ourselves by the suggestions of sensations that are at once imperfect and obscure. If we would accompany others in their train of reflections, or follow them in their arguments : then must we place ourselves, as it were, in the orbit of their view, and thus alter or enlarge our own. If we be desirous that others should readily communicate their reflections to us : then must we let them perceive, that we feel the truth and justness of their opinions, and must repay them by some similar thoughts
of

of our own. Generally speaking, in social life we traffic with our experiences, our insights, and our knowledge, against those of others, while all are gainers by this species of commerce, not excepting him who gives far more than he receives; as we do not study to know others, without likewise improving in the knowledge of ourselves, and as every person in his line and circumstances has seen much, heard much, had many experiences, and considered much, that others in a quite different line, and quite other circumstances, could not have seen, not have heard, not have experienced, and not have thought on. We there learn to see things on new sides, unobserved by us before, in new connections and other relations; learn to judge of them more liberally, and therefore with less partiality and injustice. We there meet with opportunities of freeing ourselves from numberless prejudices against certain stations, or businesses, or pleasures, or ways of life, or other

other objects, by which such as live at too great a distance from the world are shackled and led into mistake ; we learn to compare more things together, to comprehend more and to survey more objects at once, and thus likewise to form a better judgement of the whole.

And how frequently, in social life, does one spirit rouse and excite another ! how often does one light kindle another, one spark raise up a flame ! how oft does a splendid ray of light, a vivid particle of celestial fire, strike into a soul where gloominess and chilling frost had fixed their reign, and awaken all its torpid powers to motion and activity ! how often does even a pensive and inlightened head there find the solution of some difficulty, or the clue to some labyrinth of human thought, it had long sought for in vain !—And at what point does the series of reflections stop, that some happy moment, some animated conversation

versation with any friend to truth, has once given rise to ? What thought is that which does not indicate a thousand more ; which does not multiply itself a thousand-fold in the head that admits and comprehends it ; which does not return upon our mind ten thousand times, as occasion offers, and influence all our mental representations and judgements ! how frequently does it happen, that a just and good thought, a right and obvious judgement, a generous principle, an important rule of prudence, some pious sentiment or emotion, expressed by the wise man and the christian in conversation with his brethren, how oft does it fall, unperceived, into our hearts, and there germinate in concealment, like a rich grain of wheat, and soon or late produce the fruits of wisdom, virtue, and happiness, in an increase of an hundred-fold ! how oft does some good word of this kind enlighten, direct, animate, and determine us, long after it was mentioned in familiar discourse,

course, and on which we have since bestowed no great regard, and yet it now presents itself to us in all its energy and truth, as the friend, as the counsellor, and the guide of our spirit ! how manifold, in short, how copious are the materials we there collect for our own reflections, which we may work up afterwards in retirement as our views and wants require ! Certainly, if solitude be indispensable for giving justness and solidity, firmness and consistency, to our reflections ; social life is no less so for adding to the number of their objects, for giving perspicuity to them, and for rendering them serviceable by their due application.

A third circumstance which confers a great value on social life is this : men are thereby brought nearer together, gain the affection, and learn how to obtain more reciprocal satisfaction of each other. When a man lives at too remote a distance from
his

his fellow-creatures, he is apt to judge too harshly of them; seldom takes much interest in what concerns them, and his heart very often retires from them in proportion as he withdraws himself from their society and converse. Humanity, human affairs, human misery, human happiness, are in the aggregate no more than propositions of the understanding, frequently mere words, which leave the heart unmoved and cold, if they do not at the same time present us with lively images of numbers of particular persons who share in this lot of human nature, to whom these affairs are of consequence, who groan under this misery, or rejoice in this happiness. These propositions will only then become living motives to generous sentiments and actions. But this vivacity and these powers can scarcely be otherwise acquired than by means of social life, and the closer connection we thereby contract with our fellow-creatures. There alone we feel how

much we all possess in common ; how little one man can dispense with the help of another ; of how much value they are to each other ; how important is this link of the great chain, which embraces and holds them together. There one discovers many good qualities in another, several happy dispositions, many capacities and abilities, much acuteness and aptitude, which we did not suspect in each other. And how much must this contribute to increase our reciprocal esteem and affection ! how many generous satisfactions must it procure us ! there we frequently hear individuals of each condition, each age, each sex, each way of life, uttering such just opinions, such worthy, christian sentiments, and see them conduct themselves so prudently, that our spirit energetically feels its affinity with theirs, and our heart is ready to burst by expanding to congenial influence. And how closely, how intimately must this connect

nect us together ! how extensively promote the cause of humanity and brotherly love !

In social life we likewise learn to think more reasonably of the weaknesses, the failings, and the aberrations of our brother ; we learn to consider them not only in themselves, but in relation to the particular individual, to the situation and circumstances of that individual ; we learn to judge of them by their grounds and occasions ; we learn to compare them with the good that so often counterbalances, which so often outweighs them ; and how much more disposed must this render us to excuse each other, to bear and to pardon one another in christian love, and to admonish one another in meekness of spirit !

By social life we acquire more sociable dispositions, transact more social affairs, enjoy more social pleasures and satisfactions, encourage ourselves more by common prospects

pects and expectations. And by all this we are undoubtedly brought much closer together, into stricter and more intimate connections, and are therefore, if we be well disposed and inclined, far more ready to serve and assist one another, and to promote our mutual happiness. To the calls of humanity, to the arguments of religion and christianity, are there superadded the particular impulses of acquaintance and frequent intercourse, the sacred impulse of friendship, the impulse of social pleasures, and the common honour of society. And how much more must the united force of all these arguments and incentives effect in the man who does not harden his heart against them, than if he were reduced barely to follow the general and cold prescriptions of reason!

In social life we have, fourthly, the most diversified opportunities for exercising ourselves in good sentiments and virtues; and

every thing that confirms us in good sentiments and induces us to practise the virtues, is indisputably of great value to us. In the stillness of retirement I can and must, for certain, reduce the propensities of my heart to order, give them all the properest direction, kindle and inflame my love towards every thing that is true, and beautiful, and good ; that is, to virtue. But only in social life, in converse with my brethren, can I fix my propensities in this good direction, and confirm my love of truth, of moral beauty, or of virtue, by a ready and faithful obedience to its precepts. Good sentiments that remain locked up in the heart, virtues that never display themselves in action, can never possess any signal value, but may easily appear better and greater than they really are. In social life they are put to the test ; there we are cited to bring them forth ; there, in the practice of them, we meet with obstacles to vanquish, difficulties to

surmount, and oppositions to encounter; and the oftener we stand these trials, accept these challenges, and come off victorious, or at least maintain our ground, so much the better and more virtuous shall we be, and so much the more safely may we depend on our virtue.

And how various are the opportunities thus afforded us in social life! Here are weak brethren, whom I may easily offend, and thereby exercise me in circumspection about my discourses and judgements: there are numberless defects and failings, which call for my little forgivenesses, my patience, and my indulgence. Here I perceive eminent qualities of mind and heart, the advantages of person, of station, of fortune, which raise others above me, which I respect and admire without jealousy or envy, but with inward satisfaction, with hearty delight: there I distinguish myself from others by similar advantages, obtain

the approbation of others, and conciliate their love; and this esteem and affection will neither impose upon me a false humility, nor lead me into foolish pride. Here shall I be surprised into displeasure, betrayed into anger, into violence, or ill-humour, and learn from thence to govern myself; there will irregular desires and concupiscence be excited in me, which I shall encounter and subdue. Here shall I be called upon to speak with undismayed constancy in some good cause, to be ashamed of the truth before no man, to plead the cause of the man unjustly accused, or calumniated, without respect of persons: there will prudence and philanthropy impose an uninterrupted silence on me, and bid me repress any sally of wit, though never so happy, any jest, though never so pleasant, which may vex or injure another. Here I meet with a perverse being, to whom I must yield for the sake of peace; there a quarrelsome person, whose passion I must

I must restrain. Here some great or proud man, before whom I need not creep; and there an humble, timid creature, whom I must not despise or confound. Here a man of high desert, whom I shall respect, though destitute of rank or station; there an injurious, a contemptible man, whom I shall not flatter though surrounded by magnificence. Here I have an opportunity to let another shine when I might shine myself; there an opportunity to sacrifice my own pleasure and conveniency, to the pleasure and conveniency of another, and thereby of exercising myself in self-denial and magnanimity. And who can reckon up all the opportunities and occasions that present themselves in social life for confirming us in some good sentiment, for exercising ourselves in some virtue, for opposing and weakening some bad propensity, and thereby for promoting our intrinsic, our spiritual perfection? Certainly he that makes his own amendment his chief concern, will

find in every company, in every intercourse with every man, opportunities and inducements thereto.

No less numerous are, fifthly, the opportunities afforded us by social life for being useful to others in various ways; and this also must give it a great value in the eyes of the benevolent and affectionate man. And, in reality, how vast a multiplicity of services do we there render to each other, and thus advance our mutual welfare! And how important are they frequently in their consequences! we are enabled, there by instructive, entertaining, and familiar discourse, to free one person from an error, to clear up some doubt to another, and to remove from a third some scruple that gave him pain, conduct a fourth into the track of truth, and furnish him with an explanation of matters it highly concerned him to know. There may we often raise the depressed, encourage
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the timorous, cheer the desponding, advise the wanderer, give resolution to the irresolute, information to the ignorant, warmth to the cold, and fresh vigour to the almost expiring. There may we often bring the giddy to reflection, the slothful to activity, the frail to the sentiment and abhorrence of their failings, to comfort the fallen, and to animate those that are humbled by their fall to a cheerful prosecution of their course. There one while, a prudent and timely admonition, at another an affectionate suggestion, at another a friendly intreaty, at another a firm remonstrance, at another deserved praise, at another a powerful word of comfort, at another an encouraging and animated address, at another a hearty concurrence in the designs, an interest in the concerns and actions of others, may obviate many faults and transgressions, may ward off many a misfortune, prevent many an uneasiness, restrain and abate many a hurtful passion,

or occasion and reward many a good deed, unite many hearts together, and open to them various sources of happiness and joy. There often, by the presence and operation of eminently intelligent and virtuous men, the noblest qualities of the human heart are displayed, and purposes brought to maturity in actual effects, which otherwise would have remained in the intention alone. And how much may we there effectuate by our example! What influence may we obtain thereby on others! when they see and observe the beauty, the agreeableness, the generosity, the gentleness of virtue, in the lineaments of our face, in our judgements, in our whole behaviour; when they perceive the harmony of all the parts of our conduct, how tranquil, how satisfied, how cheerful, the enjoyment of a good conscience, and the assurance of the divine approbation makes us; how much brighter our hopes, and more rational our devotion; how respectable, how amiable, must virtue
and

and piety appear to them ! what an impression must these observations make on the good and the bad, on the strong and the weak, on the wavering and the steady ? what a salutary compunction must it excite in one, what a generous emulation in another, what firmness and perseverance in the third !

Social life, in short, when properly used, is productive of very many innocent and real pleasures to us. The various advantages it procures us, is the richest and the purest source of them. This greater knowledge of mankind, this extension of our views, this approximation of our hearts and minds to each other, this inward sentiment of our relationship together, this practice in the noblest sentiments and virtues, this opportunity to do good and to promote felicity ; what pleasure must it procure to the friend of truth, the friend of virtue, and the friend of the human race !

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and how many other sources of pleasure are opened to us by the reciprocal confidence, the greater freedom, the natural endeavour to please, and to present ourselves on the most advantageous side, the various instances and tokens of the benevolence of our brethren, the gaiety of conversation, the charms of festivity, so many agreeable occupations and amusements of our minds and spirits, which are the property of social life, and give it all its worth ! And how the prudent, conscious, and sentimental enjoyment of these pleasures refreshes and revives our hearts ! It recruits our spirits after finishing some laborious work ; it rewards us for our industry and fidelity in the prosecution of an arduous calling and the duties of life ; it is the relaxation of our assiduous spirit, by furnishing it with a freer and easier scope to its activity. It is repose, and yet no inactive, no irksome rest ; it is employment, and yet no violent, no toilsome business. We there enjoy our
existence

existence in community, our distinctions, our goods, our prospects, and connections ; we there enjoy in common, and with gladness of heart, the various gifts and refreshments which providence has granted us to enjoy ; we there feel the value of the mutual esteem, and affection, and friendship, which connects us together ; we there find ourselves encouraged and recompensed by the applause that is given to our projects, our sentiments, and our actions ; we there calm and delight ourselves in the idea of the manifold assistances and services we may expect from each other, and the number of things we may accomplish by united powers ; we there find a variety of food for our taste, for our mind ; we there walk a smooth and pleasant path, bestrewed with flowers, and thereby acquire fresh cheerfulness and powers for pursuing the rougher and thorny parts of our progress. And must not this be an agreeable mode of existence, a desirable enjoyment of a diversified and

and substantial pleasure? Must not the social life be of great value which procures all these advantages?

Judge, therefore, what social life might be and procure to us, what a school of wisdom and virtue, what a source of happiness it is capable of being rendered, if we constantly turned it to the best account; and from thence you will conclude, that it is commonly our own fault, when it is comparatively of small advantage to us. In the mean time, you are not to require of it all these benefits, all these pleasures, in an uninterrupted succession, and always in an equally high degree. In that case your expectations would seldom be fully satisfied, and social life would become ungrateful to you. It is sufficient, that it is adapted to procure us these advantages and pleasures, and actually does, in a greater or less proportion. Nothing more is requisite

quisite for demonstrating its excellent worth.

Understand then and feel the value of social life. Rejoice in the natural faculties and dispositions the Creator hath granted you for it. Beware of flighting or rejecting what is so deeply implanted in the nature of man, and may so much promote his perfection and happiness. Much rather follow this impulse of nature. Give into the enjoyment of social life; but use and enjoy it so as becomes a sage and a christian. Never let either the affairs of your vocation, or your domestic duties, or your christian profession, or the prudent practice of silent contemplation and rational devotion be injured by it. Call yourself frequently to account for the temper of mind you carry with you into social life, and in which you partake of it, for the advantages and pleasures you procure therefrom. Be not negligently and coldly

coldly contented with every little advantage, with every trifling pleasure you may obtain by chance. Endeavour to extract from it all the benefit, all the pleasures it is able to yield. Provide therein not only for your senses, but for your heart, for your understanding, for your reflections and feelings; and reap from social life such fruits as may refresh you in your business, and solace you in retirement.

Beware of considering social life as a matter to the use and enjoyment whereof neither attention nor consideration, neither wisdom nor virtue are required, to which every one is equally adapted and prepared, and from which every one may promise himself a like advantage. No; only the attentive and thoughtful, only the good, the feeling, the virtuous man, can enjoy all the benefits and pleasures of social life which we have discussed, or only in a superior degree. The benefits and pleasures
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which the thoughtless, the giddy, the wicked man enjoys therein, are commonly very deceitful, or are of no great value. Connections that are founded on self-interest, on humour, or dishonest projects, are of no long duration; they are as suddenly impaired or dissolved as they arose. Pleasures that do not proceed from a good, humane, and tender heart, which are barely dependent on fortuitous events, barely from motives of amusement and pastime, and of soothing the senses; pleasures wherein virtue and friendship are unconcerned, may possibly be innocent, but not respectable in any important degree, cannot wholly employ the soul in any worthy and noble manner.

No; let social life be conducive to that end to which it is adapted and ordained. Strive therein to increase and to rectify your knowledge of mankind, to enlarge the

the circle of your views, to enrich your stock of useful notions, and to confirm you in every worthy sentiment, to habituate yourself to every virtue. There learn to enjoy the intercourse with your fellow-creatures; learn to love them, shew them your affection by numberless services and various gratifications; communicate freely, abundantly, and generously to others of what you possess, if you would partake in what they have to bestow. There enjoy the pleasure of instructive, entertaining discourse, the pleasure of friendship and confidence, the pleasure of social gladness at the bounties of God; exalt and sanctify these pleasures, by cheerful meditations on the divine Being who so liberally dispenses them to all; and then let the benefits and pleasures you obtain from the converse with your brethren, give fresh incitement and vigour to the discharge of every duty of social, domestic, and solitary life. So will

will your turn for society be not only harmless, but every way profitable to you. So will it fit you for entering hereafter, in a higher state, into a closer and more blissful connection with the wisest and best of men, and from your intercourse with them draw still more copious portions of perfection and happiness.

2011-12-13

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2011-12-13

E S T I M A T E XXV.

T H E

V A L U E

O F A

B U S Y L I F E.

Not slothful in business.

Rom. xii. 11.

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BUT too many people sigh after rest as their supreme felicity, complain of the multiplicity of affairs and concerns that press upon them; wish they were discharged from them; long to be freed from all necessity of employment in any way; that they might apply their time and their faculties to some agreeable pursuit, and make such a use of them as might be most conformable to their taste and disposition. Such men seldom know rightly

what they wish for ; they commonly wish to exchange a few light and very tolerable incumbrances and evils for a far greater burden. Rest is indeed a very desirable object ; but it consists not in indolence and slothful inaction. It is founded on moderation, on regularity, on inward contentment. It is consistent with the busiest life ; and no man understands and enjoys it less than the idle and unemployed. No ; to a man that is in possession of his health and faculties, a life of business is far preferable to one spent without occupation. It procures him infinitely more satisfactions and pleasures, and tends more to his perfection and happiness.—However, that we may take nothing for granted and without due discussion, let us investigate this great value of a busy life.

By a busy life we are to understand a life wherein, by our station, our office, our calling, and our connection with other men,

nien, we are ordained to execute such works and affairs, as our time and abilities will allow us to perform.

If we would render such a life really and highly valuable to us, then, in the first place, these works and affairs must be proportionate to our powers of mind and body. We must know and understand what we have to do and to mind; we must possess the capacities, the aptitude, and the skill, that are requisite thereto; we must, at least in most cases, acquire a facility and a certain confidence in our proceedings; we must therefore be long and early exercised in them, so as to arrive at a certain dexterity therein. If we are plagued and perplexed every moment, as it were, in our work and affairs, either through ignorance of what they demand of us, or by deep consideration and doubt concerning the best method of beginning or of prosecuting a matter, or by the sen-

timent of our insufficiency to complete it; such a life can indeed be of no great value to us; it is a burden, an oppressive burden, under which we may easily sink.

If we would render a life of business highly valuable to us; the business we carry on must be lawful, and we must be fully convinced of the lawfulness of it. We must be able to transact it without inward uneasiness, without any reproaches of conscience, without any servile apprehension of God. Neither must it render us ashamed before men; and we have no occasion to be so, whenever our work or employment is neither at variance with integrity nor with the love of our neighbours, neither in opposition to divine nor human laws, let it be in all other respects as mean and insignificant as it may. On the contrary, when we are entangled in affairs to which our own conscience is averse, or which we cannot in direct terms pronounce to be right;

right; in affairs to which we may not venture to bespeak the approbation and blessing of heaven, and while employed in them we must drive off all thoughts of the Supreme Being, and his presence; in affairs which are held to be degrading and dishonourable by all intelligent and honest men, or are reckoned unworthy of the pains and the time we bestow upon them: then, indeed, such a life has so much the less value for being so busy. Affairs which a man is forced to conceal from the face of God, from the world, and from himself, the scope and design whereof he must cover with the veil of secrecy, of cunning, and of misrepresentation; of which a man cannot dare to give account to others, and scarcely to himself; and as the consequence whereof he has cause to fear, sooner or later, disgrace or punishment; such affairs must necessarily embitter the whole life of the wretch that is engaged in

in them, and can produce nothing but trouble and remorse.

For rendering a busy life highly valuable, regularity must preside in our affairs. We must know how one business follows on another, how they are conjoined together, how one is complicated in the other, how one conduces to the alleviation, the dispatch, and the execution of another. We must be able to take a just, and as far as possible a complete survey of the whole, and know determinately what we have to do and to provide for in every portion of time, in every place, in every department, in every respect. Regularity lightens even the most complicated and the most difficult affairs. They seldom come upon us unawares, they seldom find us unprepared; and even the accidental and unexpected always find leisure and room where regularity prevails. Regularity enables us to do all things with ease,

com-

complacency, and calmness; and no toil exhausts us less, none better succeeds, than what we perform in this temper of mind. On the other hand, where all is in disorder, there perplexity, contradiction, vexation, and discord, establish their sway; there a man knows not where to begin, how to proceed, or when to leave off; there one business crowds upon another; there one is forgotten, and another neglected; there a man will be one while over-hurried, and at another overloaded with affairs; there a man has so many forgotten or neglected affairs to recollect, that he can scarcely attend to the present; there a man must at one time labour till he is fatigued and exhausted, and knows not at another what he shall first undertake; there a man has no fixed point to which he tends, and knows not how near he is to the end of his labours; and all this must necessarily render his business disagreeable and difficult to him.

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Would we, lastly, have a life of business to be of great value to us, then must we pursue such affairs as we may probably expect will be productive of utility to ourselves or to others. Neither is it less necessary that we propose and settle this utility, or always make it, as it were, the visible result of our desires and endeavours, proportionably to them. Constantly to be running on the course at random, and without hopes of reaching the goal, at length must weary the most indefatigable racer. Always to labour, and never to see the fruit of our toils advancing to maturity, never to be able to gather it, must at length render the most industrious, the most persevering workman exhausted and slothful. Whereas it seldom happens, and seldom without our fault, that lawful business, conducted with prudence, with application and regularity, can fail of being useful to ourselves and to others. Only we must be neither self-interested nor covetous ;

vetous ; not have regard only to our own advantage, but also to the general good ; not only to outward, visible, and present advantage, but also take into the account the remoter good consequences of our affairs, and their influence on our spiritual perfection ; and then, with a moderate share of success, we can neither fail of an incitement to business, nor of rewards attending it.

If then a life of business be so framed, if the affairs incumbent on us be proportionate to our faculties and powers ; if they be innocent and lawful ; if we carry them on with order and regularity ; we may promise ourselves advantage from them ; then we must ascribe real and great value to such a life ; then must we prefer it infinitely to a life of indolence.

And now what gives it this value ?
Wherein does it consist ? That we may be
able

able to answer these questions, we will discuss the consequences and effects of a life thus employed.

A busy life is, in the first place, the best, the only sure preservative from that languor of mind we feel whenever life hangs heavy on our hands; and that languor is incontestably a grievous burden. Neither is the busy man at a loss to know how he shall employ the present day, the present hour, wherein he shall be occupied, or how amused. No sooner does he awake from sleep than he goes to his daily labour, sees it already before him, and disposes and connects the several parts of it together. Every period of the day has its particular allotment; one business succeeds another, one is constantly replaced by the next in order; every hour brings with it, as it were, its own contribution; and the leisure his affairs allow him, is usually too short to let him fail in the opportunities and means of

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passing

passing it both pleasantly and profitably. And the days, the weeks, the years elapse, without seeming tedious to him, or being a weight upon his spirits; and yet are they by no means lavished away; he knows he has used them, that he has employed them in a lawful and beneficial way, that he has turned them to an honest and just account, and that, in regard to their consequences, they are not lost.—On the other hand, how unhappy is the indolent man and the loiterer! how often is he utterly at a loss to know with what he shall begin the day, how he shall pass the first, the best, the most of its hours! how anxiously does he strive to divert himself! how restless, how dispirited does he run from one object to another, from one place to another, from one business to another, now beginning this, then that, finds nothing to his taste, and is satisfied with none! how much do his gratifications and pleasures depend on the most trifling accidents! and how easily
does

does the privation of any of his customary dissipations and diversions render him wretched ! how hard is he often put to it, to what dreadful labour is he often reduced, for driving on, or, as he calls it himself, for killing his time ! how impatiently does he long for the hour when he may lay down the load of dulness he has endured all day, and sink into the arms of sleep, if haply he may even there enjoy repose !

A busy life is, farther, a sure preservative from a thousand follies and sinful excesses, which the man who leads an indolent and lazy life can seldom avoid. He that has no settled business, who is consequently oppressed and persecuted by languor of mind, who feels himself unhappy, readily falls into every thing that promises him distraction, entertainment, or pleasure, into any thing from which he may hope for an alleviation of his condition. And, since he has so many hours,
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whole days, and weeks, and years to occupy, he need not be nice in chusing the means and the persons that may assist him thereto; must often while away his time with the lowest and most insipid amusements, and seek a kind of satisfaction from the grossest of pleasures; and, since the better, the busy class of mankind, neither wish nor venture to associate with him, he is generally confined to the company and conversation of such as, like him, are a burden to themselves and to others, who are as ignorant as himself how to make a good and worthy use of their faculties and their time. And from what follies and extravagances can such an one be safe? Into what folly, into what vice will he not readily plunge, so soon as they promise him pastime or sport? Far other is the case with the busy man, as above described. His business allows him too little leisure, and gives his mind too manly, too serious a turn, to let him fall into the temptation.

of misapplying the few minutes he has to spare. The love of order that accompanies him in his affairs, does not forsake him in his periods of recreation. And these, from his good character and conduct, he may pass in the company of the best and most deserving persons, which he must prefer to the conversation of the foolish and the frivolous, with men who must appear to him contemptible and noxious.

A busy life is, thirdly, the most powerful incentive, and the best means of unfolding our abilities, of displaying, of exercising, and of invigorating our faculties, and accordingly of promoting our real perfection. Without attention, without consideration, without reflection, without comparing and connecting several things together, without a constant reference to the past and the future, no business that is not merely mechanical can be effectually carried

ried on; and the more complicated, the more multifarious, the more important it be, the more unremittedly must we confine our attention and reflections to it, and keep all our mental powers in action. So much the less must we allow them to be conquered by the obstacles and difficulties that are concomitant, more or less, with every species of affairs, and which, without industry, without regularity, without persevering patience, without firmness, without foresight and prudence, must inevitably be the case. And how cogent must be the motives of duty, necessity, profit, and honour, to the application, and not unfrequently to the utmost exertion of our powers! And how much farther must we extend them in their proper and best directions; how much more justly shall we learn to think; how much more intelligent, circumspect, prudent, discreet, wary, dextrous, and virtuous, shall we become; how much more useful to others

than we could possibly be by a lazy and inactive life! How much does the man of business learn to comprehend with his understanding, to retain in his memory, and to execute with his powers! how rapidly and how easily does he survey, as it were at one glance, a long train of events, a whole series of things! how justly does he hit the point in which they all unite! how perspicuously does he analyze the most intricate matters! how many events and revolutions of things does he foresee; and how much does he adopt in his plans and projects, which would frighten the ignorant or inexperienced, and throw them into pale astonishment! And what obstacles will he not at length overcome, what difficulties will he not vanquish, by courage and confidence! And must not these advantages be held for desirable by all men? will they be too dearly purchased by a busy, a laborious life? can we exercise our powers without the exertions to which they are

are adapted, and can we strengthen and improve them without exercise? Are capacities and powers, which we possess indeed, but do not manifest, do not apply, do not know how properly to use, of any great value? Does not our inward spiritual perfection consist in the fittest, easiest, best, and happiest use, in the greatest possible improvement of them? is it not the only species of perfection that remains with us for ever? and shall we rather let these noble powers, powers by which we are able to effect so much, shall we rather let them sleep and stagnate, than awaken and invigorate them by activity and industry?

A life of business is, fourthly, the best means of being useful to others in a thousand ways, and of having a great and manifold influence on the general welfare. For the subsistence and advantage of society it is necessary that various businesses and works be executed by its members,

and that they be executed with assiduity and faithfulness. The one must in this manner, and the other in that, provide for the wants, the conveniences, the elegances, and the pleasures of his brethren. The more works and businesſes of these kinds, therefore, we undertake and complete, so much the more useful are we to society, so much the more serviceable do we render ourselves to it; so much the more ample is the contribution we bring to the common welfare. The busy man alone is grateful to the community which supports and protects him, and procures him a thousand advantages; he repays, and often repays with interest, the services it does him. Whereas the unemployed, the idler, is a mean-spirited creature, who is always receiving, and never gives, who is profitable to none, and yet requires service from all men; an abject debtor, daily increasing his debt, and never intending to pay it.— And how extensively does the busy man operate around him! for what numbers of his

his brethren, near him and afar off, known to him and unknown, of all classes and conditions, mediately or immediately, does he think, and provide, and labour ! what services does he render them, by his counsel, by his assistance, by his perspicacity, by his dexterity, by his industry, by his integrity ! how many others does he set on to the most useful activity by means of his own business ! how much evil does he prevent, how much good he promotes thereby ! how often is he by this means the benefactor, not only of the present race of men, but also of future generations ! and must not such a life be of great value, must it not be far preferable to a life of inaction and idleness ?

But, if a life of business be highly useful, so must it also, on that very account, be an abundant spring of pleasure and happiness to ourselves. And in fact, what a pleasure it is to shew our powers, to display

play them with skill, and in the most general useful way ! what a pleasure to vanquish impediments, to conquer difficulties, to produce extensive plans, to finish useful works, to bring good designs to perfection ! what a pleasure, when a man makes out his reckoning to himself at the end of the day, or the week, or the year, of the application of his faculties and his time, and can comfort himself in the reflection that he has not suffered them to lie idle, that he has not squandered them away, that he has not misemployed them, but has made them answer to the will of God, and has accomplished many good and useful matters with them ! what a pleasure, when a man can say to himself, that he has discharged his duty, worthily filled his post, that he has served and assisted many of his fellow-creatures, that he has been the benefactor of his brethren ! what a pleasure, when a man may promise himself the respect, the affection, the gratitude

of the whole society, and can accept and employ the reciprocal services, their testimonies of esteem, and the reward of his merits, with a good conscience, and with the grateful sentiment that he is not unworthy of them! and how greatly must all these pleasures contribute to the felicity of the man! how pleasant to him must be the retrospect on his past, the enjoyment of his present, and the prospect of his future life! with what confidence may he think on God, and how freely and openly converse with men! how contented, how satisfied must he be in the consciousness of his advancement in inward perfection, and the survey of the good he has effected about him! how sweet must each longer or shorter recreation be to him, the enjoyment of each innocent pleasure, either sensible or spiritual, which he has prepared himself for by useful employment, and to which his appetite is not blunted by too copious an indulgence in this seasoning of life!

life! pure advantages, pure pleasures and joys, unknown to the unemployed and the idle. To them their faculties and powers are often a useless burden. To them every day, every week, every year of their lives, is alike empty of actions and events that can gladden and refresh their minds. Then the past afflicts, the present perplexes, and the future confounds. And as often as they are forced to reflect upon themselves, they must stand ashamed before God and man. Their pleasures are uniform and tasteless. And how often must they be an incumbrance, how often disgusting to them! how great then must be the advantage in this respect of the industrious over the idle!

In fine, a busy life, conducted with intelligence, with regularity, and consciousness, and directed to the common welfare, is the best preparation for a superior, a more perfect, and a blissful state in the future world. The more we here unfold

our

our faculties, and elevate and strengthen our powers by practice ; in so much greater and more important matters shall we there employ them ; so much the more shall we there be able to do with them ; so much the more quickly and easily shall we there proceed towards the mark of supreme perfection. The more carefully and earnestly we do in this province of the kingdom of God, what he has delivered us to perform ; so much the more will he confide to us to transact and to use in that other province of his kingdom. The more extensively we here operate about us in views of general utility ; so much the larger is the sphere of operation he there will open round us. The better we here allow ourselves to be educated and formed by our heavenly father, the better will he be able to employ us there when we shall have exchanged this state of childhood for the manly age. Rest and refreshment without previous toil, payment without service,

per.

perfection without the best and faithfullest use of our powers, bliss without an active, busy life, can no more be thought of in heaven than it can upon earth, can there no more exist than here. What an encouraging prospect for the man that leads a life of business! and what a comfortless, melancholy representation for the slothful, who passes his days in loitering and idleness!

And now take all this into your minds at one view. Reflect that a busy life exempts a man from the oppressive load of languor of spirits; that it secures him from a thousand follies and sinful excesses; that it most cogently incites him to disclose his capacities, to display and exercise his faculties, and thereby to advance his perfection; that it furnishes him with means and opportunities of being useful to mankind in the greatest variety of ways, and of acquiring a vast influence on the general welfare;

welfare; that it is a rich source of pleasure and happiness to himself; that, in short, it prepares and fits him for a higher and better state; and say, after all, whether a life of business is not of real and of great value; whether it is not far preferable to an inactive, unemployed, and lazy life.

Certainly, Sirs, this is the best and noblest use of life. Hereto are we ordained and called; hereto has God entrusted to us capacities and powers, and given us so many urgent wants. By this alone can we become as perfect, as happy as man can be in the present state of things, and extract from this, usually so short and uncertain a life, as much advantage as it is able to afford us. Thus no moment of it passes empty and unenjoyed away. Thus a man, as it were, multiplies his existence, and lengthens his life. Thus a man lives and operates by others as well as himself, and
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frequently even to the latest posterity. Render therefore thanks to the Most High, if he has placed you by his providence in a busy station, proportionate to your powers, and adequate to your time. Complain not of the quantity and trouble of it. Be not sluggish and slothful in the performance of it. It is proper for the state of exercise and education wherein we live at present; and if you carry it on with understanding, with regularity and conscientiousness, if you treat and manage it as work committed to you by God, you will pursue it with comfort and pleasure, and not without advantage. Therefore, long not after the imaginary happiness of an inactive repose, or you will soon severely pay for the foolish wish. Let it rather be to you, as it was to our great deliverer, your meat and your pleasure, to perform what God has given you to do, to work indefatigably while yet it is day,
lest

lest the gloomy night of affliction and sorrow, or the impenetrable shades of death, come on before you have finished your task. Be like the faithful servants, whom their lord, when he cometh, be it late or early, findeth employed in his affairs.

Let the company right of all members be
left to the honorable judges of the
court, on behalf of the state, to be
made. He like the state of affairs, to be
made, when the court, be it law or
equity, justice employed in his affairs.

E S T I M A T E XXVI.

T H E

V A L U E

O F

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are
the honourable of the earth. Isaiah xxiii. 8.

VOL. III.

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ESTIMATE XXVI

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OF

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Whole merchants and princes, whose interests are
the honorable of the earth. 1844. 8.

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Vol. III.

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V A L U E
OF
TRADE AND COMMERCE.

IT is a matter of great importance for a man to know how to dignify his vocation, the profession he is engaged in, or the business he carries on. This lightens every difficulty, and obviates every disagreeableness he finds attendant on it ; this repays him for the painful industry and the unremitted cares he bestows thereon ; this stimulates him to do all that relates to it with alacrity and exactitude, and to neglect no part of it as unworthy of his attention,

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tention, though never so insignificant or trifling in itself. And how is this to be done? what gives a man this respect for his calling? how does it become of great value to him? One way thus; by his regarding it as an effect of the order and arrangement established in the world by God. By saying to himself; "It is the will of God that mankind should be so connected together, so labour for each other, and thus mutually contribute to the public benefit; and that I in particular should act in the station, the department, in such a manner as my vocation demands." Again, it happens, when he sees the value of his calling, or discovers what it is that renders it really important and estimable, when he represents to himself its connection with the welfare of society at large, and its beneficial influence upon it. By this means every man may confer a dignity on the calling he pursues, so that it be but lawful. And this is indisputably the best means
and

and the strongest incitement to walk worthy of our vocation. —What may be advanced of every profession holds good in a particular manner when applied to commerce. And since the generality of men are one way or other concerned in this vocation, it will not be thought inconsequent if I deliver to them a few considerations which will enable them to think adequately of it. Having then, in the foregoing discussion, investigated the value of a busy life in general, I shall now proceed particularly to examine into the merits of commerce.

When we ascribe a distinguished value to commerce, we consider it not barely as a means of providing for our own support. This property it has in common with every profession, even the meanest calling of life, that it procures us food and raiment, and supplies the wants of nature. As little do we consider it barely as the means of en-

riching a man, and of living more conveniently and elegantly than others, or of playing a more distinguished part in society. For these are advantages that do not exclusively belong to this station of life. These may fall to the lot of the handicraftsman, the husbandman, the man in public trust, and at times even to the scholar. No; if we would rightly consider and appreciate the eminent value of commerce, and thence acquire for it the respect it deserves, we must take into the account how it concurs by a beneficial influence with the general good, what it contributes towards the stock of human perfection and happiness. And now what are its pretensions in this respect?

First, it sets mankind upon a far greater, a far more diversified, and thereby a more useful activity; and every thing that promotes useful activity among mankind, promotes

motes their benefit. For only by that means will our faculties and torpid powers be, as it were, rouzed, developed, exercised, and by degrees brought to that degree of strength and perfection they are designed to attain. And how greatly does commerce contribute to this effect! What numbers of hands, what numbers of heads, it employs! to how many kinds of trades and manufactures does it give life! to how many others does it communicate a weight and value, which but for it they could never acquire, and which without it would be carried on in a more careless and superficial manner! how many sorts of industry, of dexterity, of art, does it quicken and maintain, encourage and reward! how it moves and employs, in numberless respects, the inventive powers of man! what a mighty and extensive influence it has on the rotative motion of the whole society and on all active life! how many wheels of this grand machine, large and small, does

it set in motion! and what detrimental elogs and impediments arise where its impulse is wanting! how many people it requires, how many people must strenuously exert their powers in various ways, for obtaining the products of nature, in working them up, in improving them, in bestowing them, in translating them from one place to another, and often to the remotest regions of the habitable earth! how much less diligence and industry would all these exert, how much fewer people would be employed therein, if all these products did not receive additional value from every man's hand through which they pass, if by means of commerce they were not exchanged for other products of nature, or disposed of to profit!—how much less life, industry, diligence, and address, is perceptible where little or no commerce exists, than where it flourishes! how many human hands and human heads are there almost inactive, which here would be employed

in variously useful ways! Would you convince yourselves of the life and activity which commerce excites among mankind, then imagine yourselves transported into the midst of the most famous trading city, visit its exchange and its harbour; or only represent to yourselves a populous and much frequented market-place; what a multitude and diversity of busy persons of all ranks and conditions will you there perceive! and yet this is extraordinary activity, limited to a short portion of time, and confined to a narrow space; activity very inconsiderable, compared to that which is an everlasting, uninterrupted consequence of commerce in the generality of countries on the habitable globe. And must not this give it a real and a great value?

Commerce connects men more together, brings them nearer to each other, and lets their mutual dependance on each other be more

more intimately felt; and every thing that brings and unites men more closely together is a source of pleasure and happiness to them, and may be likewise an incitement to virtue. Mutual wants, reciprocal businesses, general views, and general advantage, are as strong bands of connection and intercourse as any we know. If the merchant be in want of the industry, the labour, the mechanical and mental powers, the service and assistance of a thousand men; these in return stand in need of his protection, his support, his encouragement, and his pay. If one man would execute his designs, and attain his purposes, a thousand others must labour with him to that end. If a man would reap the profit he expects from his business, he must let a thousand others obtain a proportionate advantage. If trade be carried on with success; then must handicrafts, arts, and agriculture, flourish also; all ranks and conditions of men must then have more concerns

together, work more for each other, and enter into closer connections. And how far do these connections extend! how many classes and descriptions do they embrace! what nation is so remote that is not brought nearer to the rest by commerce? Along what pathless wilderness, over what steep and craggy mountain, across what unknown seas and oceans, does not the merchant find his way to his remotest brethren? Allow it however to be self-interest and the love of gain that teaches him to despise these dangers, and to conquer these difficulties; yet the effect is always that man is thereby more connected with man, that social dispositions are awakened and supported in them, that an interest in their reciprocal prosperity and misfortunes is strengthened and improved. And must not all these considerations taken together redound to the advantage of mankind, and tend insensibly to their improvement and perfection?

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Commerce by this means facilitates to mankind the imparting of their schemes, their inventions and discoveries, their goods and advantages, to each other. It occasions a constant and universal circulation and exchange of all these things among them. It indeed likewise disseminates many faults and vices, and opens many sources of calamity where they would else have been unknown. But do not those benefits far exceed these accidental disadvantages? how manifold and great they are! How far backward would the human race have been in every particular; how little would they have advanced above the condition of infancy; with how much labour and toil must they have supplied the prime wants of nature; how slowly would they have proceeded in civilization; if every nation, every province, had abided by its own experiences, and were confined to its own observations, discoveries and inventions! How much is learnt by one people of another, in necessary

sary and useful as well as in agreeable and entertaining matters, in mechanics and the fine arts, in agriculture and husbandry, as well as in the sublimer sciences ! and how much farther are all these particulars carried at various times by the communication of a single idea, a curious instrument, or some new device ! What important revolutions are occasioned by some fresh branch of commerce, a new kind of manufacture, an introduction of new articles of trade ! what another scope is given to the human mind for promoting arts and sciences throughout a whole nation ! And how quickly is useful knowledge now conveyed from one extremity of the inhabited and cultivated earth to the other ! How soon may the luminous thoughts, which now occupy the soul of one of my brethren in the most distant regions of the northern or southern hemisphere, become likewise mine, and diffuse light into my mind and satisfaction into my heart, or introduce
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more order into my conduct and my affairs ! How much more easily and rapidly, by means of this great connection and extensive communication, may even the weightiest matters of religion be distributed, and the most salutary, the most comfortable truths be transplanted there where ignorance, error, and baleful superstition, have hitherto prevailed ! And is it not commerce that promotes and facilitates this connection and communication of mankind with each other ?

Besides, commerce procures men a thousand conveniences, a thousand kinds of pleasure and delight, which else they must be without, or obtain them with far greater difficulty, less frequently, and at the expence of much more toil and fatigue. Scarcely any sort of productions and fruits of the earth, of the works of art and industry, are at present the exclusive property of any country. Every thing now that is
good

good and desirable is reciprocally an article of exchange. We may now see the wonderful effects of nature, in their diversified and delightful forms; may enjoy the good things of every region; make use of the intelligence, the powers, the labours of every nation; and may collect and employ as our own whatever can flatter the taste and charm the sight, whatever can add ornament to our dwellings, beautify our gardens, give neatness and warmth to our raiment, or embellish our condition, whatever can employ our mind or gratify our curiosity, from the remotest and most diversified districts of the globe; and this, in a hundred respects, is within the reach of the poor as well as the rich. And who can be so insensible to all these advantages, as to ascribe no value to commerce by which he procures them? or who will allow himself to be deterred from giving it the praise which is its due, because these

conveniences and elegances of life may be abused, as indeed they but too often are?

Lastly, by all these means, commerce contributes in no small degree to soften and polish the manners of mankind, to form their taste, and to promote mutual patience and forbearance among them. The more men converse together, and the more closely they are connected among themselves; so much the more attention will they shew to what may displease or please another; so much the more assiduously will they remove every difficulty in the way of their intercourse with each other, avoid every thing that may destroy their connection, and sedulously reject all that may give umbrage or offence to another. The more good and desirable articles they compare with others and offer for them, and the oftener they are necessitated to chuse between them; so much the more will their taste be rectified and refined; so much more impartial is their judge-

judgement of what is beautiful and good. In short, the more diversity they perceive in the sentiments and usages of mankind, and the more they observe how little influence they have on their general and most important opinions and actions; so much the more justly will they learn to judge of these things; so much more will the distance and dislike which these causes occasioned be weakened; so much the more will they be accustomed to look upon a man as a man, and to affectionate every good man, and to esteem every intelligent and honest man, to whatsoever nation he may belong, whatsoever language he speaks, whatsoever religious opinions he holds, whatsoever customs he may chuse to observe. And accordingly this inutual forbearance and esteem is always far greater and more universal among mercantile nations, than among such as are more confined to their own territories, and have less intercourse with others.

And this, Sirs, this it is, that gives trade in general a great and intrinsic value, what renders it important and honourable in the eyes of the thinking man. It even possesses this value, in a greater or less degree, when the man that carries it on thinks narrowly and acts selfishly, when he regards it merely as relative to his own personal profit, and cares not how little advantageous it may be to others. But in that case, and in regard to him, it is of extremely little, or indeed of no value, as he degrades and debases it, by his sentiments and conduct, to the lowest and most despicable means of gaining a livelihood. A great distinction therefore is to be made between the value of commerce, taken intrinsically and at large, and the worthiness it confers on such as carry it on. The former is and ever remains great and honourable; the latter but too frequently is imperceptibly small. Would you therefore, who exercise this calling, dignify it likewise in
regard

regard to yourselves, and render it a means to you of greater perfection and durable happiness; then allow yourselves to be guided by the following admonitions and precepts.

Exercise your understanding in habits of reflection, and strive to enrich it by augmenting your stock of useful knowledge, particularly such as relates to your affairs and undertakings. Study the matters in which you are daily concerned, their nature and texture, their utility, the purposes to which they may be applied, their modifications and transmutations, their influence on the general weal of the community; study the ways and means by which they are produced, obtained, wrought up, improved, and altered; study the state of the countries and people with which, by means of your occupation, you are mediately or immediately connected; study

the persons with whom you are concerned in business, or whom you employ therein, and on the character of whom so much depends on the prosecution of it; so will you constantly find in all you do employment and food for your mind; always clearly understand what and wherefore and to what end you do it; and thereby a thousand objects, which in themselves may be very insignificant, will acquire a greater value in your sight. You will execute that as thinking, as enlightened men, with complacency and pleasure, which otherwise you would only perform as day-labourers, from necessity, and probably with dislike.

Extend therefore the orbit of your views, the circuit of your knowledge and perspicacity, in proportion as you enlarge your sphere of action. Pursue the affairs that offer themselves to you, not in a mere
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mechanical manner; work and operate, not as it were blindfolded, or merely by old maxims and customs handed down from father to son, but upon well digested principles and generous plans. Strive more and more to comprehend the whole of the concern wherein you are engaged, and to comprehend it with more participation and interest. Revolve frequently in your mind the nearer and more remote, the present and future effects of your transactions and dealings, the influence they may and will have, in a thousand ways and manners, on the conduct, the fortunes, the happiness of such numbers of men of all classes and conditions. This also will confer great weight and dignity on all you undertake and execute.

Expand too in this respect your heart by benevolent, philanthropical sentiments and feelings. Let not covetousness, nor mean

self-interest, nor vanity, but genuine universal philanthropy and brotherly love, be the chief instigators of your diligence and industry. Think it your duty and your glory, not barely to labour for your own, but likewise for the general profit; and do this not solely according to the natural combination of things, and without peculiarly thinking thereon, but do it with consciousness and consideration, and so as that this view may be always present to your mind. Hesitate not to encounter difficulties, to undertake labours, to perform businesses from which you have little particular advantage to expect, but which you know will bring profit to others, or tend to the support and the good of the whole; and reckon it not as labour in vain, as pure loss, when it is attended by such consequences and effects. The idea that all you do in your lawful vocation, and by lawful means, is a part of the chain of business whereby the general

neral welfare is upheld and advanced, whereby the sum total of life, of action, of pleasure, of happiness, which is or may be among mankind, is augmented and put in circulation ; this idea must give you satisfaction and courage in all your affairs, and fill you with an honest complacency at the sight of every consequence of your good endeavours. By such a way of thinking, every business you transact, little and difficult as it may be, will become an honourable employment, a labour of love. And thus will you degrade yourselves by nothing, think nothing a loss of time or a dissipation of your powers, which in any way may be of advantage to society.

In fine, add a dignity to your calling, you who pursue commerce as rational, intelligent, and well-intentioned men, by considering yourselves as instruments in the hands of providence, whereby the cultiva-

tion of the earth and the civilization of its inhabitants are carried on and advanced ; as instruments whereby God diffuses and multiplies his manifold gifts and blessings, more intimately connects the whole of his family, so widely extended, together, brings them closer to each other, and in such various methods animates, sustains, benefits, and cheers them all. Do therefore whatever you are called to by your profession in reference to this honourable appointment ; do it from obedience and love to God, our universal Father in heaven ; do it as by commission from him, and in the manner most conformable to the wise and benignant designs of his government. By this means you will confer the greatest dignity on all your employments and labours, and exalt the faithful discharge of your calling into actual piety. You will serve God by serving your brethren ; accomplish his will by fulfilling the duties of your

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vocation ; carry on his work by prosecuting your own ; and so may you also, as men worthily filling a station assigned them by God, promise yourselves a chearful exit from this scene of things, and the enjoyment of a happy, a blessed futurity.

E S T I M A T E XXVI.

THE
V A L U E
OF
A C O U N T R Y L I F E.

Jesus—departed thence—into a desert place, apart.
Matthew xiv. 13.

THE

ESTIMATES

THE

VALUATION

OF

A COUNTRY LIFE

John—dear and much—into a better place. Amen.

THE

THE
V A L U E
O F
A C O U N T R Y L I F E.

CITIES, large and populous cities, have incontestibly their benefits as well as their disadvantages. The foundation of them, and the concourse of their inhabitants, are means in the hand of Providence for promoting its views with regard to mankind. And to this they greatly conduce in various ways. The close aggregation, the intimate connection of so many individuals together, strengthens their powers, and renders them capable of

many enterprizes and busineffes, to which a greater disperſion or ſeparation would abſolutely diſpoſe them. Trade and commerce, arts and ſciences, muſt be brought, by theſe ſtrict connections, by ſuch a union and reciprocal communication of deſigns, abilities, talents, and aptitudes, to a higher degree of perfection than they could otherwiſe reach. By the daily intercourſe of ſuch numbers of men, of ſuch various ſentiments and diſpoſitions, the natural genius and faculties muſt more quickly, more eaſily, more conſiderably be unfolded, ſet in motion, and applied. Emulation and ambition are more excited and employed, and produce more diverſified and vigorous effects than in ſolitude, or in the narrow circle of a few acquaintance and neighbours. The manners will be refined; the conveniences and elegances of life improved; the means and opportunities of ſocial pleaſure will be multiplied; and the ſallies of inordinate and violent paſſions will

will less and less frequently offend; striking advantages, for which, in conjunction with many others, we stand indebted to civil life, and which certainly are of no small value.

On the other side, in great and populous cities, bad example is more contagious; the seduction to folly and vice are far greater, and harder to avoid; the prevalence of fashion is universal and tyrannical; the implicit imitation of the noble, the great, and the rich, is servile; the sway of received manners and customs, severe and oppressive. Innocence, truth, and open-heartedness, are there almost abandoned; the simplicity of nature is stifled by art; integrity is there obliged to hide her face; simplicity is ridiculed as puerile inexperience; the passions are concealed, but act with greater vehemence and danger in their concealment. The taste will be refined, but at the same time
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be enervated and fastidious; pleasures will be multiplied, but the faculties for enjoying them obtused. Besides all this, the multiplicity of affairs, the noisy bustle, the surfeiting distractions which prevail in populous cities, are powerful obstacles to collection of spirit, to consideration, to vigilance over oneself, to frequent and animated aspirations towards heaven, and consequently are powerful obstacles to wisdom, virtue, and devotion.

The more therefore a man is smitten with the love of nature, and his Creator and Father; the more charms he sees in innocence, truth, integrity, and simple manners; the more taste he has for silent reflection; the more he is able to entertain himself; the dearer he esteems wisdom and virtue, and heart-felt devotion; the more agreeable must it be to him when at times he exchanges the tumult of the town for the quiet of the country; as he there can
breathe

breathe, and think and live more freely ; as he there comes to himself and converses with his own heart, can hearken to the voice of God in nature, and in less artificial, less corrupted men, and indulge himself in the most natural and unadulterated meditations and feelings without reluctance or restraint. This, in all ages of the world, has been the nutriment of the spirit and the wages of application to all the wisest and best among the sons of men.

Our Saviour likewise, that excellent example to all the wise and good, seems thus to have thought and judged on this material article. He did not indeed deny himself the company of his brethren, and was sometimes seen in populous towns and cities, nay, even in the capital itself ; as he could there best prosecute the work his father had commissioned him to carry on, the work of enlightening and improving his contemporaries and mankind in ge-

neral. Yet these populous cities and towns were not his constant residence. At times he forsook them, and retired to the desert, that is, to unfrequented or less frequented places. At times he ascended the mountain, and there past the evening alone. There he recruited his spirits after the wearisome labours of the day; thought upon his grand concern; collected, by contemplation and prayer, familiar intercourse with his heavenly Father, fresh vigour and powers for finishing his work on earth; refreshed himself by thinking on what he had already done, and what remained for him still to do; and rendered himself happy in the sentiment of his dignity, and his proximity to him that sent him.

Few among us are deficient in opportunities for making similar experiences and enjoying similar satisfactions. Many are so circumstanced as to be able to pass a longer

longer or a shorter period of the summer in the enjoyment of their gardens or the pleasures of the country. But whether we turn these advantages to such account as becomes rational and wise persons; whether we extract as much utility and instruction from them as they are capable of yielding; is what I shall now strive to render easy for you to answer.

The time we spend in the country is, in the first place, instructive in regard to God and our behaviour towards him. In the dissipation of cities, in the embarrassments of a bustling life, or in the giddy circles of amusement, meditations on God and the sentiment of his presence are but too easily prevented or effaced; there the knowledge we have of him is too frequently but a dead letter, and the use we make of it only a mechanical operation of the mind. But in the midst of the great theatre of his works, surrounded by the mere effects of his wisdom and bounty, in the enjoyment

of rural quiet; in the open and free view of his heaven and his earth, there a man's feelings are quite altered, there he intimately feels that in him he lives, and moves, and has his being; that he inhales his air, is enlightened, warmed, and cheered by his sun, that he is invigorated by his power, and exalted to communication with him, and is encompassed on all sides with the bounties and blessings he has prepared for us. The deity is there, as it were, close to us, though he be no where far from any of his creatures. His existence is more certain to us; it is demonstratively apparent; and all doubts, that may possibly arise in us at other times, here lose all their force. God is, and he is the Creator and Father of thee, and of all beings; this every thing around us declares in an incessant voice. We there see him, in a manner, acting, working, imparting of himself, and diffusing benefits about him with a liberal hand, and employed in the preservation

servation and welfare of every thing that exists and lives. The less we behold of human art, the more we see of nature, and the more beautiful she presents herself to us, the more does she lead herself back to God; the more do all objects animate and exalt our ideas and sentiments of him. Every blade of grass, every flower of the field, every plant, every tree, every insect, every beast, the rising and the setting sun, the mild refreshing breath of evening gales, and the majestic violence of the storm, the serenely smiling sky, and the dark tempestuous night,—all, all announce to us the presence of the Almighty, the supremely wise, the supremely good; all render him, as it were, sensible and apparent; all call us to bow down before him, to adore his sovereignty, and to rejoice in his existence. There every thought on God will, with the good and sensible man, be accompanied by correspondent feelings; and every sentiment bestowed on

supreme wisdom and goodness must be attended by reverence, by love, by gratitude, by joy, by hope, and assurance.

And here interrogate thyself, O man, O christian, how near or how remote, how natural, or how foreign to thee is the sentiment of God, what impresson it makes upon thee, what other reflections and sentiments it excites within thee. Ask thyself: how wert thou disposed, what didst thou think, how didst thou feel, as thou walkedst alone across the smiling fields, or over the flowery mead, or the verdant lawn, or up the shady grove, or by the serene and placid lustre of the moon. Did not a gentle reverential tremor, did not the sacred sentiment of the proximity of God, affect thee? Was it not with thee as if thou sawest the Lord, as formerly he was seen in paradise, walking amongst his creatures, as if thou heardest him talking to thee, and explaining to thee his will and
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his designs? And if this holy sentiment have fallen to thy share, if it have penetrated thy very heart; what love to thy Creator and Father, what trust in his benignity and providence, what zeal to do his will, and to promote his views, what benevolent dispositions towards all thy fellow-creatures, what aspirations after superior perfection and bliss, must it have excited in thee! Happy they, who are able to recollect many such blessed moments! To them the thought of God is not a foreign thought. It lives and governs in their soul, and secures them a succession of unfulfilled pleasures, and of perfect joys.

Rural life is, secondly, very instructive in regard to the real worth and destination of man. Here, my christian brother, here man appears to thee more in the character of man stripped of all outward and dazzling distinctions; here mayst thou better learn to esteem him for what he is; learn what

is properly his own as a human creature, what gives him real worth. A robust and healthy body ; a sound and vigorous mind ; a chearful temper ; an honest heart, replete with love towards God and man ; a prudent and active industry in his profession ; wisdom, founded on years and experience ; virtue that consists more in actions than in words ; piety that does not perhaps render the man more learned, but makes him better and more tranquil ; these are of greater account than birth, and rank, and station, superior to all the borrowed splendour, with which the rich and great make so much parade ; and these alone, both here and every where, compose the true worth of man. Learn then to measure thyself and the inhabitants of cities by this standard ; so wilt thou judge differently and far more justly both of thyself and others. No empty pride in things that are not of thyself will inflate thy mind ; no excessive admiration of merely outward distinctions will

will degrade thee into a flatterer and a slave. Thou wilt esteem and love every one as thy brother who acts and thinks like a man, and acknowledge nothing as honourable in thyself and others but intrinsic and lasting perfection and goodness.

But there mayst thou likewise learn more justly to judge of the destination of man. When thou there considerest how many and how various the toilsome and continued labours, how many the hands and faculties that are requisite for fertilizing the earth, for procuring food and cloathing for its inhabitants ; canst thou then possibly doubt that man was designed for an active and busy life, for a just and due application and exertion of his powers ! Canst thou then possibly think, that he sufficiently fulfills the intention of his being, when he sedulously shuns whatever bears the name of labour ; accounts all appointed
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and renewed toil for constraint and grievance; passes his days in slothful ease, in a delicate reservation of his faculties; or employs himself barely in fruitless speculations or idle researches, which have no influence on the welfare of human society? Canst thou possibly imagine that men who thus think and act can claim any just precedence above the husbandman? or canst thou then doubt of the great importance both of himself and his vocation? canst thou refuse him the esteem and the gratitude he deserves? No; the cultivation of the earth is the first, the most natural, the most necessary, the noblest and most honourable condition and calling of man; and he that despises this station of life, despises the ordinance of God, and forgets to what purposes man was designed by his Creator.

O thou who consumest in town the products of the country, forget not from whence the food thou enjoyest, the beverage

verage that refreshes thee, the cloathing thou wearest, proceed, whence and by whom they are prepared and adapted to thy use; and despise them not who render thee this essential, this indispensable service. Honour the husbandman as thy steward and provider; oppress him not with hard services, with severe exactions, and still less with the burden of contempt, so hard to be borne; for even he has the manly, the moral sentiment, and that very frequently less impaired or vitiated than the generality of the inhabitants of populous cities. Honour him as thy elder brother, who provides for the whole family, prosecutes their most laborious affairs, and thereby leaves his younger brethren time and leisure, and ability, to provide for the conveniences rather than the necessities of life, and for feeling and enjoying a variety of more refined pleasures. Yes, honour agriculture, as the prime, the peculiar source of wealth, as the firmest support of
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the commonweal, without which neither arts, nor sciences, nor trade, without which even thy civil luxury and splendor could not subsist. And, if thou hast no means, no calling, no occasion, to pursue arts and sciences, trade and commerce, or movest in what are termed the higher circles of the world; then haste thee back to thy primitive vocation, to the culture of the ground; and then believe that thou art more agreeable in the sight of God, thy Lord, and far more honourable in the eyes of thy intelligent brethren, than if, replete with vanity and pride, thou squanderest away thy time and thy faculties, and requirest to reap where thou hast not sown.

This is not all, my christian brother! Even in respect to the superior vocation of man when we have done with this terrestrial life, our sojourn in the country, and our converse with its inhabitants, may be very instructive. How many mental powers,

ers, how many great and happy dispositions, how many generous sentiments, wilt thou there discover, which, in their confined and narrow sphere, in their simple and uniform train of affairs, can scarcely be displayed, applied, or used in the degree and extent to which they are adapted ! How many heads, which for acuteness, for wit, for docility, for extending or improving some of the sciences, or by state-policy, would have rendered themselves conspicuous, had they been produced in different circumstances, and in other connections ! How many hearts, susceptible of the noblest and most effective benevolence, which might have felt and provided for the happiness of many thousands, if they were not thus totally destitute of the means and opportunities thereto ! How many men, who live and die in the deepest obscurity, that would have attracted the attention or admiration of all beholders, had they been placed in a more exalted station ! And shall

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not these powers, these dispositions, be unfolded in another life? shall not these generous sentiments be one day made capable of exerting themselves in action? shall not all these active and improvable minds, all these sensible hearts, all these eminently good and useful human creatures, shall they never be what, from the ground plot of them, they may become? has their Creator made such great preparatives for so poor a purpose? can he have lavished away so much power of production for such trifling effects? canst thou believe this of him whom all nature declares to be supremely wise? No; the more undeveloped capacities, the more restricted faculties, the more unfinished human souls, thou meetest among thy brethren; so much the more certain mayst thou be of their immortality and of thine own, of their and thine everlasting progress towards higher perfection.

Very

Very instructive to the reflecting man is, thirdly, his abode in the country, in regard to whatever may be termed happiness. Here seest thou, O man, thousands of thy brethren and sisters, who inhabit no palaces, no houses adorned with the beauties of art; who partake of no costly dishes artificially prepared; who wear no sumptuous and splendid apparel; who loll on no luxurious couches; who yet in their humble cottages, with their ordinary food, in their simple attire, on their hard beds, find much comfort and joy, and nourishment, and invigoration, who probably find in all these a greater relish, than thou in the enjoyment of affluence and superfluity. Here seest thou thousands of thy brothers and sisters, who are daily employed in the most laborious, toilsome, and which appear to thee the most disagreeable grievous occupations; and who yet are chearful at their work, and contented with their condition: men who are totally unacquainted with all

thy exquisite delicacies, and with the generality of thy refined pleasures; and yet complain neither of languor, nor of the want of pleasures and pastimes; men whom the glad sentiment of their health and powers, the view of beautiful nature, the prospect of a plentiful harvest, an abundant production of the fruits of the orchard, the peaceful enjoyment of the refreshing evening breeze, the familiar table-talk, and the animated rejoicings on festivals and Sundays, more than compensate for the want of thy splendid distinctions; men, in short, who indeed are very confined in their religious notions, and probably are erroneous in many respects; but adhere to what they know and believe, and console and refresh themselves by meditations on God and the world to come, on numberless occasions, wherein thou who knowest, or pretendest to know more, art driven and tossed from doubt to doubt, and no where findest peace.

Here

Here O learn what true felicity is, by what means and in what path thou mayst seek and find it. Here learn that happiness is not confined to affluence; does not consist in outward glare; not in rank and titles; not in a soft, luxurious, idle, and inactive life; not in an eternal round of diversions; not in the unhappy means of hearkening to every childish foolish fancy, and in exploring the methods of its gratification. No; learn to find it in the chearful sentiment, and the alert application of our powers in an active and busy life, in the due discharge of the duties of our calling, in the confining of our desires, and in the diminution of our artificial wants; to know that it consists in contentedness of heart, and in comfortable reflections on God, and on the better world of futurity; that it therefore is far more dependent on ourselves and our manner of seeing and judging of things, than on our outward circumstances and the regard we

draw ; and that no man is utterly secluded from the possession and enjoyment of it, be his station in life what it may.

Learn therefore to dismiss thy complaints, and no longer accuse the Creator and Father of the world ; accuse thyself and thy froward taste, and thy irregular desires, and thy fervile propensity to imitation, and thy false, perverted judgement on the worth of things, and the weakness by which thou sufferest thyself to be deceived by appearance and show, or swayed by the senseless fashion of the times, and the waste or abuse of thy extensive knowledge — of these things thou mayst complain ; but, from complaints proceed to alteration and amendment, if thou art not happy, or only happy in a slight degree ; since thou mayst drink at every source of happiness which nature, art, society, and religion, open to thee. And when thou hast learned this, thou hast learned the sci-

ence which is the most important of all, the science of being chearful, pleased, and happy, and of ever becoming more so.

So instructive may the time we pass in the country be to us, and so instructive actually is it to reflecting persons. To such an one what appears to be no more than recreation and pleasure, will prove a copious spring of wisdom. Thus will he at once invigorate both his mind and his body, the health of the one, and at the same time the health of the other. Thus does he draw nigh unto his Creator, his Father, his God; learns to behold and feel him in all his works; and rectifies his judgement on the worth and ordination of man, and on his real felicity.

ance which is the most important of all, the science of being cheerful, pleased, and happy, and of ever becoming more so.

So instructive may the time we pass in the country be to us, and so instructive usually is it to reflecting persons. To such an one what appears to be no more than recreation and pleasure will prove a vigorous spring of wisdom. Thus will he at once invigorate both his mind and his body, the health of the one, and at the same time the health of the other. Thus does he draw nigh unto his Creator, his Father, his God; learns to behold and feel him in all his works; and receives his instruction on the growth and extension of man, and on his real destiny.

ESTIMATE XXVII.

THE
V A L U E
OF
DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

And he left them, and went out of the city into
Bethany, and he lodged there. Matthew xxi, 17.

ESTIMATE

THE

VALUE

OF

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

And he felt them, and went out of the city into
Bethany, and he lodged there. Matthew 21:17.

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THE

V A L U E

O F

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

IT not unfrequently happens, that a man is diligently looking for what lies by him; and is seeking at a distance what is inviting him at home to immediate enjoyment. And this is commonly the cause that he either does not find what he seeks for, at all; or not so complete as he wished it to be. Thus all men seek content and happiness. But probably they least search for it where it would be the most easily, the most certainly, and the

most completely found. They overlook or scorn the sources of it which lie nearest to them, and are already in their possession ; which no man can shut up from them, no man can render tasteless or bitter ; which flow indeed without noise, but in a copious and incessant stream ; and rove about in anxious perplexity after others, which must be discovered with great labour, can only be sparingly enjoyed, from which they cannot always, from which they can but seldom draw undisturbed, nor entirely slake their thirst, and often run the hazard of taking in bitterness and death with the waters thereof. I will speak without a metaphor. But too often does a man seek his principal pleasure, his whole felicity, in what is called the great world, in numerous and brilliant companies, in distracting and deceitful diversions, in extensive connections with such persons as are distinguished by their rank, their train, their opulence, their luxuries, and their magnificence, and live sumptuously

ously every day, or rather seem as if they lived. But too often do they run from one such glittering circle to another, from one such company of counterfeit freedom and joy to another, in hopes of assuaging their thirst after pleasure and happiness. But how seldom do they find what they seek ! how much seldomer do they find it so pure, so complete, as they expected ! how oft do they mistake the shadow for the substance, appearance for reality, and find themselves lamentably and shamefully deceived in their most flattering hopes ! and how much more easily and satisfactorily, how much more sincerely and completely might they have found and enjoyed this pleasure and happiness, if they had been contented to look for it, not so far off, but nearer at hand ; not in noise, but in quiet ; not in what depends on mere accident, but is in their own power ; in short, if they had sought for it in domestic life !

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Yes; in this little unrenowned circle, is there more real, solid joy, than in the more shining, the more celebrated companies; more and more various happiness is to be found than on the grand theatre of glaring shows, and tumultuous diversions. Here, in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, it is that the wise man, the christian, principally seeks and finds refreshment, recreation, and joy. Here even our Lord, whose taste and sentiments were in all respects so humane and generous, sought and found them. Wearied by the labours of the day and the contradictions of his enemies, he repaired to participate in the peace and comfort of a family united together by the tenderest affection, the family of Lazarus and his sisters, and to increase their satisfactions by his presence and converse. This humble abode of domestic happiness he preferred to the lofty palaces of the great, to all the festivities of the rich and the riotous mirth of the
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voluptuous. Happy they, who in this respect likewise are so minded as Jesus was ! They can be deficient in no real felicity.

Great, uncommonly great, is the value of domestic happiness ! But infinitely greater to them who know it by experience, than to such as are only acquainted with it from description.

Domestic life, like all other external goods, is not necessarily and of itself, but only in particular combinations and in certain circumstances, a real advantage and a source of actual felicity. Home is but too frequently rendered the seat of tiresomeness and disgust ; the scene of low and ungoverned passions ; the abode of vexation, of various dissensions, and of malicious petulance ; not seldom an actual place of torment. This is always more or less the case, where wisdom and virtue are not admitted of the party, and do not animate
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its busiesses and pleasures. Only there where wisdom and virtue dwell, where intelligent and good persons live together, only there dwell peace, satisfaction, and joy; it is they alone that render either a cottage or a palace the receptacle of pleasure; only by their means is any family, whether great or small, rendered capable of happiness. For only the intelligent and good can tell what solid happiness implies; none but they have either the taste or sentiment proper for it; it is they alone that estimate things by their real value, and know how to enjoy above all things what is real and beautiful and good, unesteemed and unknown as they may be in the great world, and among such as are not disposed to the more delicate sensations. To them a word that overflows from the fullness of the heart, a look that indicates the soul, an inconsiderable but harmless action, an unimportant kindness but performed from real affection, a calm and silent sentiment of friendship, a free effusion of one's reflections

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and feelings into the bosom of one's family, is of more worth than the reiterated protestations of civility and regard, than all the flattering encomiums and blandishments, than all the friendly miens and gestures, than all the splendid entertainments in which the glory and happiness of the generality of large companies consist.

Wherever domestic happiness is found, it shews us persons who are connected together by real, intrinsic love and friendship, who live entirely by each other, and who seek their happiness, and their honour, and their force, in the mutual union of their hearts. Only to persons of this description can and must every thing be of importance which each has, and says, and does, and enjoys, how he is inclined, and whatever befalls him. They alone know how to consider the advantages of each other with unerring complacency, observe the infirmities and failings of each other without displeasure; to reprehend the deviations

deviations of a third with inoffensive gentleness; understand the looks of each; and to prevent the wants and wishes of all; mutually to comply with the designs of each other; to harmonize with the feelings of the rest; and to rejoice heartily in all the successes, even the most inconsiderable, that happen to each other. Wherever frigidity of temper and untractableness, where jealousy and envy prevail, there no real happiness is possible, in the narrow circle of daily intercourse.

Lastly, domestic happiness gives scope to a taste for truth, for nature, for a noble simplicity, and serene repose; in opposition to error and art, to studied and forced pleasures, and the more ostentatious and poignant diversions. That pure and generous taste alone can give any value to the joys of domestic life, and, to such as understand and enjoy it, render all its concerns important, and delightful as the sources

sources of satisfaction and pleasure. For, in this case, they arise, not so much from the object, as from the eye that beholds them, and the heart that feels them; not so much from the importance of the transactions and events themselves, as from the natural and spontaneous manner in which they arise, and the pleasing interest taken in them. To persons of a sound judgement and an uncorrupted heart, the cheerful countenance of the spouse, the lisping of the infants, the mirthful sports of the children, the sight of reason in its bud and in its blossom; to them the earnest curiosity of one, the innocent vivacity of another, the growth and improvement of a third, the contentedness of all, is a scene far preferable, with all its privacy and simplicity, to any other however intricately conducted or splendidly performed; to them the silent and placid existence in a society of open affection, of unrestrained and unobtrusive benevolence and love, to
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hearts that are able to melt, is a kind of existence which they would not exchange for any of those that are so much prized and envied by the multitude.

This once premised, the happiness of domestic life has doubtless a great, a conspicuously great value. Let us examine what gives it this value, or wherein it consists.

The comfort of domestic life is, in the first place, the most agreeable relief from the burden and heat of the day, and of business that is frequently tiresome; the sweetest recompence for the labour we have finished, probably after much toil, great exertions, much opposition, and at last is finished without success. Here peace, recreation, and repose, await the father, the mother, the individuals of the family, after they have finished, perhaps in the sweat of their brow, the labours of the day. And
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the cool dusk of the evening cannot be more welcome to the weary traveller than the recreation they enjoy in the bosom of their family. Here the man of profound science relaxes his spirit, expands himself over all the images that are from without ; lowers himself to the comprehension of the chattering infant, to the understanding of each of his children ; watches and cherishes every indication of a sound mind and a good heart as it springs forth, and accommodates himself to every thought and sentiment that presents itself to him without his expectation. Here the man of affairs forgets the perplexities of his office ; dismisses his cares for a time, if he cannot entirely discharge himself of them ; receives comfort and encouragement from the partner of his soul ; and his heart expands, his countenance brightens again, and troubles and cares flee away, till he has collected fresh vigour to resume his burdens, or rid himself of them. Here the scholar breaks

off the thread of his investigations; steps out of the labyrinth in which he had probably entangled himself; and often finds, in the enjoyment of the innocence and noble simplicity of his offspring, more truth and more tranquillity, more alimment for his mind and heart, than all the learning and all the arts in the world could give him. Here every man sees and is sensible to what he works for, for whom he exerts his faculties; and rejoices the more over what he has done, as those who reap the fruits of it are the dearer to his soul. Here every man receives the praise and applause he deserves, and receives it from the persons whose approbation and praise is of most importance to him. Here the drooping are raised, the faulty restored, the slothful excited, the afflicted consoled, and satisfaction, by degrees, is diffused over all. And where, O my friend and my brother, where wilt thou, where canst thou seek and find this happiness, this recreation,

tion, this reward, if thou findest it not in domestic life?

The happiness of domestic life is quiet, peaceful self-enjoyment; a self-enjoyment that is multiplied and ennobled by the intimate participation of all the concerns of this trusty society. Here a man returns from distraction and dissipation to himself; feels his existence; has a clear, distinct, internal consciousness of what he is and possesses, and lives more in himself and for himself, and in them and for them who are nearest to his personal being, than in outward things. Here what we are with regard to the larger civil society, and for which we must so often forget what we are in and of ourselves, comes into no consideration; we lay aside our titles, and posts, and dignities, and borrowed distinctions, which, like our robes of ceremony, are oftener an incumbrance than an ornament to us; we return to our natural state

of liberty, play no artificial character, represent no strange personage; think, speak, act entirely according to our own peculiar turn, as our sensations arise, and appear what we actually are, and nothing else. Here a man feels and presents himself as a man, the spouse as the spouse, the parent as the parent, the child as the child, the friend as the friend; but no one as sovereign or as subject, no one as the statesman, or as the prelate, or as the public teacher, or as the merchant, or in any other reference to station and calling. And how blessed is this inward unadulterated sentiment of humanity, this sedate enjoyment of real independent, intrinsic perfection and dignity! How much more blessed than any participation in the illusory turbulence and dazzling splendour of the great world! How many innocent and generous emotions here arise and are displayed, which, in the ordinary hurry of business and dissipation, slumber in the recesses of the soul, as if in
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covert from the scorn and derision of the vain or the wicked ! And is not this to be properly called living, fully to enjoy one's life, and to be glad and rejoice in it, like a rational being, with consciousness and consideration ?

The happiness of domestic life is, thirdly, the delightfulest, freest communion between co-ordinate and mutually loving souls. Hence retire all the constraints of art, fashion, received usages and ceremonies ; all fear of cruel censure, of galling reproof, or biting jeers ; all uneasy constraint ; all wearisome attention to a thousand indifferent, insignificant things. Here every one shews himself in his own native colours, and is not solicitous to conceal even his harmless weaknesses, his actual imperfections and failings. Here one heart unfolds itself to another ; and every reflection, every sentiment, is transferred from one to the other, acquiring solidity

and truth as it proceeds. Here no sorrow, no care, no wish, no joy, no hope, remains shut up in the recesses of the heart; but, by free and reciprocal communication, every sorrow is mitigated, every care diminished, every worthy desire encouraged, every joy redoubled and heightened, every hope becomes an actual enjoyment. Here each exchanges what he has for what belongs to another, and alternately gives and receives information and comfort, and force, and satisfaction, and rest; while all feel themselves the richer, the greater, the stronger, and the happier, for what they are and possess in common. And where, I beseech you, where can these effusions, these communications of the heart have place, with so easy a freedom, and in so wide an extent, as in domestic life? And what a value must the happiness of it thus acquire in the eyes of the man who loves nature and truth, who has a humane and tender heart, ready in communication, and yet

yet finds so little matter for its nourishment beyond the circle of his familiar friends !

And still how many more agreeable circumstances and advantages are connected with this happiness, which highly augment the value of it !

The happiness of domestic life is, fourthly, inexhaustible. It renews itself daily, it multiplies itself without end. As much as nature is more diversified and richer than art, so much more various and abundant in pleasures and joys is this happiness than any other. Here are no settled boundaries, no determinate way and manner, how and to what extent a man shall please and delight himself. As various as are the employments, the transactions, and the events of human life, and as various as the revolutions that daily obtain in regard of all these things ; just so various also are the objects of friendly entertainment, and the

familiar converse of domestic life. As inexhaustible as the thinking principle of the human spirit, and the sensitive faculty of the human heart, so inexhaustible are the sources of delight that here stand open. Here no good word that is uttered falls to the ground ; here no effect is without its reciprocal consequence : no sentiment that is not adopted, no testimony of affection that is not extended, no civility that is not returned, no satisfaction that is not enjoyed by all, no emotion that is not transfused into every heart. Here the recollection of the past, and the prospect of the future, are combined in the enjoyment of the present ; all together form but one, and that a highly interesting whole ; all take a lively part in all ; and how much must the agreeable employment and the pleasures of each by this means be multiplied ! How much more than there, where only certain kinds of pleasures or amusements are to be found, which always wear the same aspect,
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and always return with the same restrictions ; where a man is so seldom thoroughly understood ; so often exhibits his thoughts and feelings, wherein none coincide either in sentiment or sensation ; so often excites envy by his contentedness, and dark looks by his chearful mien ; and where commonly the most separate, and not unfrequently the most opposite interests actuate all the individuals of the society ! No wonder then, if pleasure often fails, and its dull monotony renders it still oftener insipid !

The happiness of domestic life compensates the want of any other ; but no other can compensate the want of that. Let the world, let thy compatriots withhold from thee the justice, the respect, and esteem that are due to thy merits ; repay thy services with indifference and ingratitude ; how speedily wilt thou forget these slights, or these injuries, when thou returnest to the

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the bosom of thy family, art received by them with open arms and open hearts, and among them thou passest for what thou really art, obtainest the approbation thou dost actually deserve, and feelest the whole worth of their affection and love ! Has all the glittering tinsel of the great world, all the magnificence of the court, all the triumph of majesty and power, left thy heart empty and cold ; has the farce of dissimulation, of artifice, of falshood, of childish vanity that was there performed, wearied and disgusted thy spirit ; how soon will thy deadened heart expand itself as thou enterest the doors of thy house ! how soon will it feel a mild and genial warmth diffusing life and animation to its centre ! how soon will the sincerity, the frankness, the affability, the innocence which there prevail, restore thy soul, and reconcile thee again to the human race !—On the other hand, be as full as thou wilt of the bounties of fortune ; be the darling of the great ;
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be the idol of the people ; be the oracle of the politest companies ; be even great and rich thyself ; preside over as many others as thou canst ; but in thy habitation be the seat of discord and jealousy, and thy domestic life deny thee the peace, the satisfaction, the pleasure it yields to the wise and good ; how little will every outward and dazzling circumstance of fortune make thee amends for this essential inward defect ! how much will this one defect embitter the enjoyment of every species of success ! how hard and intolerable will the burden of it be !

Hence it is, that the enjoyment of domestic happiness is always no less improving and useful than pleasant. It is here a man learns the true ends of his being ; here he is taught rightly to appreciate the value of all the goods of life ; here he is convinced of the emptiness of grandeur, of pomp, of rank and station. Here he
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is taught to think, and feel, and act like a reasonable creature ; learns to forget his outward distinctions, and to see them in their proper light, more as toys and baubles, or even incumbrances, than as things in themselves respectable. Here all hearts are united, and ever uniting closer ; the one becomes still dearer to the other, each is ever more ready and willing to assist and serve the rest ; all collect new avidity and new powers to fulfill the duties of their calling, to deserve the esteem and applause of the others, and thereby to promote the welfare of the whole community, which is but one heart and one soul. With what zeal must the father and the mother of the family be animated in their affairs, what perseverance will they not be fit for, while they taste the fruit of their industry in the enjoyment of domestic happiness, in mirthful converse with their children, and furnish themselves daily, by means of continued application, with successive pleasures
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and renewed joys! What a strong incitement must this be to the faithful discharge of their duties! And must not those pleasures be of extraordinary value, which instruct and improve whosoever enjoys them?

Still more. To the enjoyment of domestic happiness, no troublesome, no expensive preparations and arrangements are needful. It may be enjoyed at all seasons, in every moment of life. No sooner does the hour of social refreshment, the hour of meeting again, the moment of finished labour arrive, but with them enter cheerfulness and mirth into this happy circle. No sooner does the want of this pleasure make itself felt, but the means of satisfying it are ready at hand. Selfishness and ill-humour, and a thousand pretended or real obstructions and restraints, which defeat the schemes of pleasure among people of fashion, have little influence here. The inclination of one is the inclination of the other.

other. This chearfully bestows what he has, and as chearfully and gratefully accepts what another gives him. When one is glad, gladness inspires them all; when one of them enters to the rest with a brightened aspect, joy beams from the faces of all. When one has done some good or obtained some success, and imparts it to the intimates of his spirit, then is it as if all as well as he had done or enjoyed it. What advantages have such pleasures and joys above those that often require a whole week to be spent in planning, arranging, and expecting them; then by caprice or accident are still longer put off; and at last, in a few hours, are over and gone, and very seldom produce what they were thought to promise!

To the enjoyment of domestic happiness as little of art and dexterity is requisite as of preparation and arrangement. It is wholly the work of nature and sincerity;
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not the effect of preconcerted devices, of studied parts, of a troublesome observance of the laws of behaviour, and the modes that prevail for the day. A sound mind, and a good affectionate heart, is all, my dear brother, that thou needest to the enjoyment of this felicity. The less constraint thou here puttest on thy mind and thy heart; the more freely thou allowest them both to act; so much the more purely and perfectly wilt thou enjoy this happiness. Though, in the great world, both of them must crouch under the yoke of fashion, and the mind can seldom venture to think aloud, and the heart seldom dares to display its feelings; yet here they may both follow their bent unimpeded and free, and exhibit their powers and qualities, in that way and to that degree which is suitable to the inward impulse, and the present occasion.

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This also gives the happiness of domestic life a great advantage, that the enjoyment of it is never attended by surfeit or disgust, by sorrow or remorse. It is real enjoyment; and the sincerity of it constantly maintains its worth. It is innocent enjoyment; and innocence fears no reproach. It is social, affectionate enjoyment, which excites no jealousy, and attracts no envy; by which no one is injured, with which none are unsatisfied, from which none are sent empty away, and all are contented with each other. It is an enjoyment that is grateful to our Father in heaven, which is not disturbed but exalted by reflecting on his presence, and which often consists in pious joyfulness for his bounty, in the heart-felt worship and praise of the Supreme eternal source of being. After this pure enjoyment, these lofty pleasures, thou hast nothing to fear in calling thyself to account; thou wilt not be ashamed of what thou hast spoken or done; thou wilt
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have no cause to think of appeasing those thou hast irritated, or of repairing the injury thou hast done to thy brother; wilt cheerfully think on God, on thine immortality, and on the world to come. Rest and sleep will not shun thy embraces; but thou wilt the more completely relish the comforts of them both, and delightful visions of the innocent pleasures thou hast enjoyed will frequently even there be floating on thy mind.—And canst thou boast of this, O thou that seekest thy happiness principally in great and shining companies, in loud tumultuous pleasures, in places of thronged resort? Hast thou never lamented the preparatives, the expence, the time, the pains thou hast bestowed upon them? art thou not frequently far more languid and heavy on returning from them than when thou wentest to them? have not often perturbation and concern about the consequences of thy transactions, or reproaches for thy transgressions,

sions, accompanied thee to thy dwelling? have they not often, for a longer or a shorter time, destroyed thy peace? have they not often incapacitated thee for prayer, or rendered it irksome to thee? And if thou have experienced this, and do so still; then confess the advantage, the quiet, innocent joys of domestic life possess over thine.

Lastly, the happiness of domestic life is restricted to no class of men. It is attached neither to station, nor to opulence, nor to majesty and power; confined neither to the palace nor to the cottage. It may be enjoyed of all mankind, by persons of every rank, of every age, in every place. The sources thereof stand open to all; to the poor no less than to the rich, to the low as well as to the high, to youth and age alike; every one may draw from these wells, and every one draw pleasure to his heart's desire. And which is that external
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that in this respect may be compared to the happiness of domestic life? How few men are able to acquire an ascendancy over others! how few to shine in an exalted station! how few to obtain affluence and riches! how few to raise themselves above others by personal distinctions, or by arts and erudition, or by great and heroic deeds, and solace themselves with the applause and astonishment of their contemporaries! But all intelligent and good men, the servant as well as his lord, the countryman as well as the citizen, the unlearned as well as the scholar, all may enjoy the happiness of domestic life, and may enjoy it in its full perfection. It is human sentiment, it is human happiness, which every creature that is human has an equal right to enjoy, and the same means to obtain. And what a great, what an eminently great value must this confer upon it!

Now let us take all this together. Consider what an agreeable relaxation from labour, and requital for it, what a silent and serene self-enjoyment, what a free delightful communication of our inmost thoughts and feelings, the enjoyment of domestic happiness is; consider that it is as diversified as inexhaustible; that it makes up for the want of every other happiness, but can never be itself supplied by any; that while it is so pleasant, it is also instructive and useful; that to the enjoyment of it neither great preparations nor peculiar dexterity and address are required; that it draws after it neither disgust nor remorse; and that, in fine, it is peculiar to no condition of men, but is capable of being enjoyed by all; and say, after all this, whether you know of any other external that has a greater worth than this, or even a worth so great?

No;

No ; if you would enjoy pleasure, innocent, pure, daily, renewing, never disgracing, never cloying ; delights worthy of the man and the christian ; then seek them not at a distance from you, since they lie at home ; seek them not in things which are not in your power, but in what is more your own ; seek them in the happiness of domestic life. If you may venture to expect them any where, it is certainly there they must be found !

E S T I M A T E XXIX.

T H E

V A L U E

O F

F R I E N D S H I P.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
Prov, xviii. 24.

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T H E

ESTIMATE XIX.

THE

VALUE

OF

FRIENDSHIP

There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.
Prov. xviii. 24.

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pende on circumstances and events that are not in our own power; and even very intelligent and worthy men, of a sensible and friendly heart, may and often must forego the happiness of friendship, I mean strict and cordial friendship, without any fault of their's. At the same time it must be confessed, that the more a man opens his heart to universal benevolence, to philanthropy, and brotherly love, those great commandments of the Christian law; the more he allows himself to be governed by the spirit of them; so much the more adapted and disposed will he be to even the most noble and most exalted friendship. Nay, friendship would be a very general virtue, and the whole society of Christians a sodality of friends intimately united together, if they all, with unremitted ardour, conformed to the precepts of that doctrine which they all confess, and suffered themselves to be animated by the spirit of it.

Of this, what we know of the founder of Christianity, and of its primitive professors, will not allow us to doubt, When we see Jesus repay the gentle, tender, and affectionate disposition of his disciple John with conspicuous demonstrations of love and confidence; when we see this disciple so often leaning on his breast, and hear him continually called the disciple whom he loved; when we see our Saviour selecting the house of his friend Lazarus as his place of refuge and recreation; when we hear him say to his followers, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go to awake him;" when he afterwards hastens to his grave, weeps at the sight of his body, and the beholders exclaim, "See how he loved him!" how can we entertain the least doubt of the friendly disposition of Jesus, or think that such a disposition is at variance with his spirit and his doctrine?—And the connection that subsisted between Jesus and his disciples and followers

lowers in general, certainly presents us with an example of the most generous friendship. How indulgent, how affectionate, how familiar, was his converse with them ! how great his concern for them ! If ye seek me, said he to the guards who came to seize him, then let these go their way. It is recorded of him, that, having loved his own, he loved them unto the end. And, when he was shortly to be separated from them, how he soothed, and comforted, and encouraged them ! how he seems entirely to forget himself and his important concerns, that he may attend to them ! how tenderly he takes leave of them at their last social supper, and enjoins them the commemoration of him ! how he bears them in mind even during the whole course of his sufferings, and in the last sad scene of them interests himself in their welfare ! and how he hastened, as it were, on his resurrection from the dead to shew himself to them, and to dry up their tears ! Was not

not this friendship, was it not the most exalted friendship?—And the first Christians, who, animated and inspired by the spirit of Christianity, were but one heart and one soul, who had all things, as it were, in common, who were daily of one accord together; did they not compose a band of the most intimately connected friends, cemented together by the love of God, and the love of Jesus, and the love of each other?

No; Christianity is by no means unfavourable to real, virtuous friendship. It, on the contrary, inspires us with all the dispositions, incites us to all the actions, and makes us ready for all the sacrifices wherein the characteristics and the glory of friendship consist. Only we must learn how properly to understand and appreciate it. And this is the purport of my present discussion.

Friend.

Friendship ! What a sacred, what a venerable name !—and how abused and profaned ! Now the richest robe of virtue ; now the mask of vice. Now the indissoluble band of generous and noble souls ; and now the most perilous snare of the betrayer of innocence. Here the parent of truth, of uprightness, and sincerity ; there the disguise of the most artful treachery, and the deepest cunning. One while a strong incitement to the fairest and most magnanimous atchievements ; at another, a low means of prosecuting and attaining the most selfish designs. And all this while, real friendship still maintains her station and supports her dignity. She preserves the exalted place she has obtained among the virtues and prerogatives of human nature, among the sources of our felicity. But not every thing which bears the name, not every thing that borrows her garb, is she herself. Let us therefore, for her vindication,

dication, rightly discriminate between appearance and reality.

When I speak of the value of friendship, I must not be understood to comprehend under that term what the general abuse of it implies; not every extensive or more limited connection that may be founded on relationship, on or business, or on conviviality, or on social resort to pleasures and diversions, wherein neither intrinsic affection, nor tenderness, nor confidence, has part. This is generally nothing more than a selfish intercourse of trifling civilities and services, in which the heart has little or no concern; and often a low traffic of mutual profit, which subsists for so long a time as each can find his account therein. No; real friendship is pure and generous affection, is the close and complete union of hearts, which is testified by an actual participation in all the joys and sorrows of the other, a mutual and unreserved confidence,

dence, and the most disinterested officiousness, and so connects a man with his friend in regard to sentiments and sensations, that they both of them make but one self.

Neither is similitude or conformity of disposition, of taste, of propensities, and pursuits, nor the strong inclination these things mutually occasion to each other, the only, nor even the principal materials for raising the structure of that friendship which truly deserves the name. This similitude, this conformity, this mutual propensity, may likewise subsist among fools and dishonest men, and do connect them together for a longer or a shorter time. But who will decorate such combinations and connections as these with the sacred name of friendship? They are not unfrequently conspiracies against the general welfare, confederacies for social depredation or debauchery. No; only the similitude of disposition and sentiment, grounded on mutually

mutually good inclinations and propensities, on generous and beneficial designs and pursuits, that can so draw men together, and unite them so intimately to each other, that they shall become in a manner one heart and one soul; and only in this union can real and exalted friendship consist.

Is our friendship then to have a great and solid worth; it must be built on the real advantages of mind and heart; on understanding and virtue, and on reciprocal esteem. Both heart and mind are alike necessary to it. The good heart is not alone sufficient to the happiness of friendship. It must be guided by a sound, adjusted mind, if we would not frequently occasion our friend, against our will, more dissatisfaction than comfort, more harm than profit. The light that enlightens as a friend, and the warmth that animates me, must not be like the dazzling flash of the lightning and the scorching heat of the

summer's sun, but like the light of the day and the mild and chearing breath of the spring.—But even the regulated understanding and the soft and tender heart are but weak and frail supports of friendship without the help of virtue. The friendship which does not rest on virtue, on mutual love to all that is beautiful, and true, and right, and good, cannot be of long duration. It is capable of no generous and magnanimous sacrifice. The unprincipled man is always at certain periods interested and selfish. His views, his preferences, change with his inclinations, and take the colour of his passions; and as often as these press into action, the voice of friendship is heard no more, and its most sacred rights are trampled under foot. Friendship between the bad only lasts till one has had his ends of the other in the prosecution of his plan, in the gratification of his sensul desires, or in the oppression and the ruin of a third. Only the virtuous
man

man remains true to his friend even when he can procure him no more profit, and afford him no more assistance, when he has nothing left to return him for all his civilities and services, but a heart that confesses and feels their value. It is virtue alone, in fine, that can shew my solid and lasting esteem towards my friend. And what is friendship without esteem? The creature of self-interest, of humour, of sensuality, or of a blind mechanical impulse, that is liable to as many alterations and accidents as the foundation whereon it rests.

Farther : if we would reuder our friendships of any actual and great value, they must be disinterested, generous, and therefore impartial. He that courts my friendship, only that he may promote and effect, through my means, certain purposes advantageous to him, or hopes to execute some plan of ambition with greater facility ;

cility; who is only so far and so long my friend as he finds his account or his pleasure in it; he profanes the venerable name under which he conceals his base and selfish schemes. The true friend looks more to the welfare of his friend than to his own, and feels himself much happier when he can give him any thing, can help him, can work for him, or suffer for him, than when he receives assistance or benefits from him. He honours and reveres the spirit, the heart of his friend, that which makes him a respectable and amiable man, and not his station, his wealth, his figure, his influence over others, or any externals. But, with all this, he is impartial. He does not overlook the greater accomplishments and merits of others with whom he is less closely connected; does them strict justice; shows them, if they deserve and want it, still more respect, still more reverence, still more assistance, than to the friend of his heart; places them, not only in thought
but

but in deed, above him, and furthurs their views and their prosperity, even to the apparent detriment of his friend, whenever truth and justice, and the common interest, require it of him.

Nay, if I would have my friendship truly and highly valuable, if I would have it morally good, then must it, thirdly, be at variance neither with universal philanthropy, nor with the advantage of the whole society of which I am a member, nor with the particular relations wherein I stand towards my parents and family, and my fellow-citizens. Friendly affection, any more than patriotism, must not degenerate into misanthropy. I am neither to sacrifice to my friend my duty, nor the claims of the innocent, nor those of the public welfare; not so exclusively to attach myself to him, and to live for him alone, as to deprive others of my esteem and affection, my benevolence, or my con-

verse and services, who have equal commands upon them. This neither will nor can be required by the friendship that is founded on wisdom and virtue; nay, it would be injured, dishonoured, disgraced, thereby. On the contrary, the more pleasure generous friends shall sacrifice to their duty; the more worthily each maintains his post in human and in civil society! so much will the tye of friendship, that holds them together, be more closely drawn.

Lastly, friendship receives its greatest value from real heart-felt piety. This binds a man to his friend by all that is venerable, holy, and comfortable in religion. This renders every thing that is of consequence to mankind, their common concern. This cleanses their hearts from all sordid interests and low propensities. This binds them together as fellow-worshippers of God, as the disciples of Jesus, as co-heirs of the future felicity, by the strong cement

cement of faith and hope. This opens to them a prospect into a superior state, where affection will be everlasting, and where they will incessantly be striving after perfection with united powers. And this surely must make them capable of the most persevering fidelity, and ready for the greatest sacrifices! What exalted feelings must it interchangeably impart to them! What a value must it communicate to their friendship!

Friendship thus framed, and resting on such a solid foundation, has a great, an inestimable value! Let us see what gives it this value, or wherein it consists.

In the first place, friendship is the most intimate and happy conjunction of two souls of the same generous temper. All things in nature, as well in the spiritual as in the material world, are continually striving to unite, to obtain a closer and completer union. As all the particles of mat-

ter mutually follow the law of attraction ; so do spirits likewise, so do human souls ; so all things tend and endeavour to assimilate with whatever is or appears to be homogeneous to them. This is the foundation of love ; this the ground of friendship. Some have sensual and gross, others spiritual and noble conjunctions in view. The wiser, better, and more perfect two friends may be, so much the more perfect is their union also. When both of them are of a sound and vigorously reflecting mind, have a capacious and sentimental heart ; when both have a widely extended knowledge, great and elevated notions, pure and generous feelings ; both great activity in goodness ; they then possess, as it were, more points of contact, so much the greater similarity or homogeneity, incessantly drawing them closer, and binding them more indissolubly together. They see so many objects on the same side, from the same point of view, in the same combinations ;
they

they think and judge of so many important matters in the same way ; they are on such a number of occasions penetrated by the very same sentiments ; employ themselves so frequently and so earnestly about the very same things ; that each sees the other in himself ; is sensible to himself in the other, and both so think, and will, and feel, and act, as though they were but one. Friendship is, in fact, a reduplicated or multiplied kind of being, and of effecting and of enjoying good. Each exists, as it were, in the other, is operative and effective by him. The good which one does, is done by both ; the satisfaction that one enjoys, is enjoyed by the other likewise ; the merit of one is also to be set to the account of the other. Both are animated by the same common interest, and are set upon the most diversified activity. And how much must all this concur to unite like constituted souls ! and how happy must be the sentiment, the enjoyment of this union !

True

True friendship is, farther, the most intimate community of all the joys and sorrows of life; a community, which as much improves and heightens the one, as it diminishes and alleviates the other. No joy is of any great value which remains entirely locked up within my heart, which I cannot impart to a being of my kind, which I cannot enjoy with him; even the most exalted, the divinest of all joys, even the joys of piety, would cease to be what they are, if I could not enjoy them in the sentiment of the presence of God, and of my connection with him; and every even the slightest sorrows may become oppressive, may be intolerable, if I be forced to bear them alone, if none of all that surround me will suffer with me, or if I am not supported under them by the thought of the presence of the Almighty. But what joy will not be improved and multiplied, what joy will not frequently be augmented into transport, by communicating

cating it to the friend of my heart, when I know that he feels it as much as I do myself, that he will call my attention to every circumstance, every consequence, every effect of it, that can increase its value, and that he will, for me and with me, give praise for it, from the fullness of my heart, to God, the giver of joy ! And what solid and good reflections, what humane and generous sentiments, what honourable purposes, what useful employments, what circumspect prosecution of them, what innocent enjoyment of nature, what improvements in knowledge or in virtue, what progress towards our common aim, must this produce in friends thus connected together, and augment their satisfactions in it ! How must all be ennobled in their eyes by the pleasure they mutually take therein, by the heart of sentiment and affection wherewith they enjoy it !—And their sorrows, how much more tolerable, how much lighter, must they be to them, by not being abandoned to their own violence and rage, by their being un-
locked

locked from the recesses of the heart, where they would rankle and the more deeply inflict their stings, but are shaken forth from the bosom of the one into that of the other; all that tormented and pained him is entrusted to the other without reserve, not even concealing that which probably no danger, no torture, would have extorted from him! No; neither suffers for himself alone; neither bears alone the burden that oppresses him; each obtains from the other all the comfort, all the counsel, every assistance he ever has it in his power to give him. And what a sweet is friendship able to infuse even into the bitterest sorrows of human life! what a light it diffuses over the darkneses that surround it! what vigour and courage it inspires into the weary and heavy-laden heart! what little circumstances does it not apply to cheer and revive it! with what a lenient hand it binds up its wounds! what attention, what officiousness, what complacency,

cency, what indulgence, what sacrifice, is too inconsiderable or too great to this end ! And what repays and rejoices more than when we see the suffering friend suffer less, suffer more composedly, or suffer no more ; when we can see him restored, strengthened, cheared, and satisfied, again in possession of the comforts of life ?

Real, virtuous friendship is, thirdly, an united pursuit of one and the same end, an animated endeavour after higher perfection. And how much must their endeavours be thus facilitated in the glorious attempt ! Hand in hand they walk the path of wisdom and virtue ; with united hearts, with combined forces, they labour at their improvement and happiness. One quickens and encourages the other to proceed ; one incites the other to industry and perseverance, one kindles the other to generous and noble deeds. Each watches over the other, as much as over himself ;

warns

warns him of this danger, reminds him of that duty, supports him in each toilsome, each painful enterprize, and affectionately recalls him from every indirect and devious way. If one stumble or fall, the other raises him again. If one grow slack and weary on his course, he is inspired with new firmness and courage by the voice and the example of the other. Each finds in the other the skill, the ability, the dexterity, on a hundred occasions, which he would never have found in himself. Neither of them is weakened or retarded by low self-interest; but a generous emulation animates them both, and allows not one to be left behind. They fight in conjunction against every disorderly passion that stirs within, against every attack of envy and derision, against the baleful influence of prevailing principles and practices, against every carking care and every mining sorrow. And how much must this facilitate the conquest over all their foes! The more

impediments and perils they meet with on the way, the more difficulties they have to encounter; so much the faster will the knot that connects them be drawn; so much the more will their fidelity be exercised and secured; so much the more poignant will the mutual sentiment of friendship be; and so much the more effectual their united efforts to vanquish every obstacle, to surmount every difficulty, and to force their way through dangers and calamities to the prize of their high calling; and to lay their hand upon it with concurrent ardour. The severest penury, the most manifest danger, the hardest and most expensive sacrifices, are at once the sustenance and the test of their generous friendship; and the more a friend can do, and risk, and sacrifice, and suffer, and laboriously acquire for his friend, so much the happier is he in the sentiment of his friendship. And of what actions and what enterprises are not such friends capable!

capable ! To what degree of virtue and perfection may they not hope to attain !

And what a value, what an inestimable value must all this confer on friendship ! What terrestrial happiness, what outward distinction, can be compared to it ! None ; it is of far greater value than wealth and honour, and power, and all the thrones of the earth. With it, a man may be deprived of them all, and yet be happy ; without it, though he had them all, his heart would never be satisfied, nor his thirst after happiness be assuaged.—Even love must yield the palm to friendship. Sensual love is consumed and destroyed by enjoyment ; and when it is not raised upon friendship, or does not change into it, it inevitably draws after it satiety, disgust, and aversion. The joys of friendship alone neither droop nor decay, and the fruition of them never deadens desire. If friendship be less lively and vehement than love,
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it is therefore the more lasting and pure. Its objects are capable of continued advancement, of incessant perfection; on which new beauties, new charms, new blossoms and flowers, for ever appear. It combines not flowers which bloom to-day, and are withered to-morrow; it does not incorporate frail materials of dust and corruption; but its connections are of souls, of spirits, of immortal beings; beings for ever raising themselves higher above the dust, for ever approaching nearer to the Father of spirits. Love generally dies on this side the grave: but friendship extends to the regions beyond it, into the better world to come; death only transplants it into a new scene, where its satisfactions will be purer and more perfect, and display itself in still nobler exertions and more glorious actions.

Great as the value of friendship is, however excellent it be to the man that enjoys

it, yet is it no prerogative of the darling of fortune, no good to which only persons of superior stations can make pretension. No; friendship but seldom takes up her abode with the rich, still seldomer with the high and mighty. She prefers the cottage to the palace, the simple manners of the private person contented with his moderate circumstances, to the pomp and luxuries of the great; often does she rather chuse the house of sorrow than the seat of festivity. Men of the inferior classes keep more tog ther, are more sensible to their natural equality, do not circumvent each other so much in their undertakings and designs, are less frequently competitors for the same pre-eminence, are not so dissipated and relaxed, and do not so often forget themselves amidst a multitude of extraneous objects; and the sufferer wants to be commiserated by some one into whose breast he may pour out his sorrows, whose presence and participation will comfort and
chear

cheer him, and in whose conversation he may forget both his distresses and his pains. Thus friendship very frequently is a counterpoise to misery, while the want of it deprives the most shining circumstances of the greatest part of their worth.

Plain considerations; which will not allow us to doubt that friendship is a highly desirable blessing, that it is the choicest and best privilege of life. Happy they who possess this rare advantage, who have learnt to prize it as it deserves, and are sensible to the felicity it confers. To them it is a never-failing spring of tranquillity and comfort, of satisfaction and joy. To them must the path of life be far smoother, more lucid and pleasant, than to the wretch who must wander through his course, without a guide and a friend to observe his ways and partake of his pleasures, who must bear the hardships of it without assistance, and often fall for want of a support.

Wouldst thou then know the happiness of friendship from experience, O my christian brother ! then be cautious in chusing thy friend. Herein let wisdom and virtue conduct thee. Let not the outward graces, nor a smooth and smiling face, nor flattering speeches, nor studied civilities, nor the first impression of complacency, nor every similarity in sentiment or taste, beguile thee. Do not carelessly give away thy heart to the first pretender to it, or who procures thee present pleasure. Give thy confidence to no thoughtless, inconsiderate man, to no convivial jester, to no witling, to no scorner of religion and severe morality. Connect not thyself with any to whom the band of wedlock, the ties of domestic and of social life, and the still more venerable cement that unites the creature with the Creator, are not sacred. In thy choice, prefer understanding and probity to all the glare of riches and the pomp of station, candour and openness of heart

heart to the most polished sentiments and the most amusing wit; prefer even the severest reprover to the most agreeable flatterer. Chuse for thy friend, the friend of truth, the friend of virtue, the friend of humanity, the friend of God. Rather forego a while longer the happiness of friendship, than run the least risk of finding wretchedness and misery where thou soughtest for the purest of human delights!

Wouldst thou, farther, enjoy the happiness of friendship, and that in a rational and lasting manner? Then form no extravagant, no romantic conceptions of it. Be not deluded by the notion of a friend that no where existed, or who must have been a useless or a worthless member of society if he did so exist. Be reasonable in thy demands on thy friend. Require no perfection more than human, no infallibility, of him. Forget not that he is a man, a feeble, circumscribed creature, li-

able like thee to err and to mistake, and must and will be so while he is a man. Forget not that he is a father, a husband, a brother, a citizen, head or member of some larger or less society, and stands in several connections with a thousand others. Then require him not always to judge exactly right, to give thee constantly the best advice, to have his countenance always equally bright, his behaviour always alike agreeable and pleasing, his heart ever equally open and sensible, or his interest in whatever concerns thee equally active and warm. Lay it not upon him to live only for thee, to converse with thee alone; still less, that he should wound his conscience for thy service, or sacrifice to thee the welfare of those who look up to him for protection and support. No; the firmest tie of friendship is mutual exactitude and integrity in the discharge of our duties, as well as mutual indulgence and patience.

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Wouldst thou, thirdly, render the enjoyment of this happiness lasting as well as complete? Then deal circumspectly with thy friend. The flower of friendship must be reared and tended with a gentle hand; it has need of nurture and refreshment, to preserve it from fading and withering away. Bear then with the harmless weaknesses of thy friend, though probably distasteful to thee. Impose on him no burden that he may find difficult to bear. Give him as freely, at least, as thou receivest of him. Put him not to trials which may imply distrust or awake suspicion. Extort no services or attentions; and force not from him the secret with which he is not willing to entrust thee. Beware of imputing to him each look, each word, each trifling action, which might not, probably, have been accompanied with a sufficient degree of energy, as a breach of friendship, when thou art once become sure of his heart. Let not the power thou

haſt over him degenerate into authority and rigour ; or the freedom and familiarity that ſubſiſts between you, into a total neglect of the rules of breeding and of all reſerve.

Wouldſt thou, laſtly, enjoy the charms of friendſhip, and learn their value from experience, then be punctual and exact in the diſcharge of all the duties thou oweſt to thy friend. Pay a ſedulous attention to his wants, his views, and his connections ; think nothing that concerns him to be indifferent to thee, but conſider his intereſts as inſeparable from thy own. Figure to thyſelf, as often as thou canſt, what he may expect or require from thy friendſhip ; and let chearfulneſs and pleaſure accompany and animate whatever thou doſt in his behalf. Thank him for the civilities and ſervices he accepts from thee, as much as for thoſe thou receiveſt from him. Above all things be ſcrupuloſly
exact

exact and faithful in the most important and generous demonstrations of virtuous friendship. Exhort, incite, encourage, and stimulate him to every thing that is laudable and good; and be not deterred from it by the fear of forfeiting his esteem and affection. The friendship that will not stand this trial, that will not be the firmer for it, is not deserving of that honourable name, deserves not to be cherished with all possible care, as the chiefest felicity of life. Indeed, thou must not be discouraged by the first unsuccessful attempt. Indeed, thou must endeavour to procure admission and audience to thy admonitions, thy warnings and thy reprehensions, by every thing that is persuasive and prevailing in friendship. Indeed, thou must repeatedly bear with the displeasure of thy once more equitable friend, and bear it with undiminished affection. But, when he will by no means allow himself to be admonished, to be cautioned, to be reprehended by thee, if he
will

will only endure to be flattered; then let the bond of attachment between you be cancelled for ever. It was not dictated by wisdom and virtue, and might easily have led thee into a snare.—But, if thou art justified in requiring this of thy friend, then likewise, on the other hand, take the admonitions, the suggestions, the remonstrances and reproofs of thy friend in good part, and with a grateful resentment. Respect and love him the more, that he may have less frequent occasions of giving thee such testimonies of his esteem and affection; and so run with him towards the mark of human perfection, to which every virtue, every species of happiness, and therefore friendship, infallibly conducts.

ESTIMATE XXX.

THE

V A L U E

OF

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY.

Be not ye the servants of men.

1 Cor. vii. 23.

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ESTIMATE

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V. A. D. U. E.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY

THE

THE
V A L U E
OF
CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY.

THE spirit of Christianity is a spirit of freedom. Of this its doctrines, its precepts, as well as the character of its founder, and the whole temper it communicates to its true professors, allow us no room to doubt. Where the spirit of the Lord is, says one of the Apostles, there is liberty. Christianity promotes liberty of each kind, civil as well as religious, among mankind.—If it any where is not so ap-
parently

parently favourable to it; if any where it seems to require of its followers an unlimited and implicit obedience towards magistrates and governors; this was extremely necessary in the primitive times for the confirmation and extension of it. The christian doctrine must have been clear of every thing that might excite suspicion of worldly aims, or fear of civil commotion. It must first disseminate illumination and morality among mankind, before it could venture directly to give incitement and encouragement to the vindication of their rights. A vigorous and lively sentiment of liberty in men, who are but little cultivated, and have no firm principles, is often, generally speaking, more prejudicial than useful. But the spirit of Christianity, the whole system of dispositions and manners it inculcates, has indisputably the advancement of both kinds of liberty in view. No doctrine whatever allows a man to feel more forcibly his natural equality with all others;

others; none more expressly preaches to him philanthropy and brotherly love, universal kindness and active beneficence; none inspires him with a livelier sentiment of his dignity as a man; none is more fertile in great, generous, and elevated improvements of mind and heart; none teaches a man to consider death with greater tranquillity; and to meet it with more firmness; none makes him readier to die for his brother, and the public good, as Jesus died for mankind! and who sees not that no dispositions can be more manifestly at variance with servitude and bondage, and none more favourable to freedom than these? O were they but more general among christians, and that even rulers and governors would but learn to think in a more christian manner! How much advantage would accrue to the cause of freedom, and consequently of human happiness! Far be it from me to preach disorder in the state, or disunion and schism in the church!

but to preach and to promote liberty, and to render the greater or the smaller proportion of it you enjoy the dearer to you, is the duty of a man, the duty of a christian! and to contribute something to the discharge of this duty is the scope of my present discussion.

Civil liberty is there in its greatest perfection where a man is only subject to the laws, and chuses his own ruler and chief. In other constitutions of government there exists always so much the greater or less degree of freedom as the laws more or less bear sway, and as even the arbitrary will and power of the ruler is thereby circumscribed. So likewise religious liberty is there in its greatest perfection where a man is in subjection to no other laws than the precepts of reason and his own conscience, and unimpededly may follow their impulses and injunctions. And when likewise here limitations are set, then does so much

much more or less liberty of this kind obtain as such limitations are more extensive or confined, as they relate to essential or unessential matters.

That we may rightly estimate the value of this liberty, we must first take notice of several other kinds, and accurately distinguish from it what is often called, but is not, liberty.

Liberty, in the first place, is not licentiousness nor misrule. To be free, does not imply, to act without principles, without views, according to the dictates of inordinate will; not to break through and despise all restrictions; not to reckon every law as a violent imposition, and to reject it as soon as we think or feel it in the least degree inconvenient to us; not to set aside all that is fit, and to get over all that is decent; not to exist and live barely for oneself, without any regard to others. No;

laws, accurately defined, inviolable to all states and conditions of men, laws obligatory on princes and magistrates as well as on subjects, are the first and firmest foundation of freedom. Wouldst thou enjoy a liberty controuled by no law, limited by no authority, in the full power of doing merely what thou are pleased to do; then get thee from the society of men; return to the woods, to the pretended state of nature; live among the animals thy relations, the beasts of the field; or lead the life of a hermit, divest thyself of all the privileges, and renounce all the comforts of social life. For, where men live together, and would live securely and happily together, there must be law, there must law bear sway, there must every one sacrifice a part of his natural freedom to the peaceful possession of what he retains. No; the greater the freedom of the citizen; so much the more sacred must all the laws of the state, the first as well as the last, be to him. The
more

more freely the worshipper of God may think, the less he is tied to forms and confessions; so much the stricter and more conscientiously must he conform to the eternal and unchangeable laws of reason, and be guided by the precepts of a revelation which he confesses to be divine.

Farther. The love of liberty is not a querulous disposition, is not a spirit of opposition to all laws and ordinances, to all received notions and doctrines, a repugnance to all institutions, establishments, and usages, introduced into civil life and the public worship. No; the more sensible a person is to the value of his own freedom; the less will he be disposed authoritatively to set bounds to the freedom of others. The more uninterruptedly he may follow the dictates of his own conscience; so much the more does he respect the conscience, even the erroneous conscience, of his brother. The less he is tied

down to opinions and formularies of doctrine himself, and the more sensibly he is hurt when his faith and his persuasions are made the objects of derision ; so much the more indulgent is he to the opinions and persuasions of others, and the less will he allow himself to controvert or to rectify them otherwise than by argument, and with a placid and gentle spirit. The unseasonable reprovcr, the biting scoffer in this way, is not solicitous for the cause of liberty, but for his own ; he is not animated by the love of freedom, but by pride, and the love of dominion.

Lastly, it is with liberty, as with all the other blessings of life ; it is only of great value to them who know how to use it properly. Often is it made a fertile source of disturbance, division, tumult, and confusion to the citizen as well as to the worshiper, in the church no less than in the state. Often is it made instrumental to the
passions,

passions, to pride, and vanity, to self-interest and ambition; often does it degenerate into arrogance, into licentiousness, into fury; and then it can certainly produce nothing but misery. In the hands of weakness and vice, every thing becomes dangerous, even wisdom itself. But this detracts nothing from the value of liberty any more than of wisdom.

No; great, inestimably great, is the value of it! The happiness it procures or promotes, far outweighs the accidental evils that attend it. The subsequent considerations, which set its value in a proper light, cannot fail to convince us of this truth.

Liberty is the natural state and the warmest wish of man. Every thing that lives and thinks is panting and striving after freedom. The beast bears not the trammel without violence, and struggles

under the yoke we lay upon his neck ; and the more sentiment of self, the more reflection a man possesses above a beast, so much the more oppressive and intolerable must it be to him to bear similar or heavier shackles, and to sigh under a similar or a more galling yoke. No ; man is not born for slavery, he is not designed for bondage. This is shewn by his dispositions, his capacities, his faculties, and the consciousness he has of them all, and the voluntary and deliberate uses to which he can apply them. Every man has these dispositions, these capacities, these faculties, and this consciousness, in common with all other men. No man is essentially distinguished from the others. No one belongs to a higher species or genus of beings. All are equal with each other, as men ; all are brothers and sisters in the properest sense of the words. To determine ourselves, to act by our own intellect, is what exalts mankind above the beasts of the field, and
makes

makes us what we are. He who despoils him of this liberty, or arbitrarily circumscribes it, therefore degrades and debases humanity, and makes himself guilty of the crime of treason against the human race. He usurps a pre-eminence over his brethren, over creatures of his kind and race, which only beings of a superior order to man can claim, like that which man maintains over the beasts of the field. This natural equality of men, and the rights that are grounded on it, are undeniable and unalienable. The unessential but accidental difference of weak and strong, of greater or less mental and bodily powers of men, may and must occasion mutual dependence, various connections and regards, but not tyranny and slavery. Even the feeblest, the most limited man, is still a man, who indeed is in want of a guide, a counsellor, an overseer and provider, but not a tyrannical lord. Civil as well as religious society must be that in the large, which do-

meftic fociety is in the little. In them, as in this, are father and children, teacher and fcholar, leader and follower, head and members, lawgiver and fubjects; but neither there nor here are tyranny and bondage. This is the voice of nature, fpeaking aloud to all fenfible men, and her behefts and decrees muft ever be facred to all confcious beings.

Liberty, civil and religious liberty, brings, fecondly, the mental powers of men into greater play, fets them in greater and more diverfified action, and furthurs thereby their perfection. The more diverfified and important the affairs which occupy the human mind, and whercon they are free to think, to judge, and to difcource; the more incitement has it from within and from without, to difplay, to ufe, and to exert its powers, and to ftrengthen itfelf by thefe ufes and exertions. And what can be more important

to him than the concerns of the state to which he belongs on one hand, and the concerns of the religion he professes, on the other? To whom can his own personal happiness, and to whom can the means and ways by which it is advanced or retarded, be indifferent? and who can reflect and discourse thereon, if he be allowed to do so at all, without great attention and participation, without a manifold application and exercise of his mental powers? He, indeed, who is not allowed to think and to know more of matters of state or religion, than it is held expedient to let him think and know; he who is obliged to judge of what is right and fit by prescriptions and fixed formularies; he has soon excogitated the matter; he will shortly become indifferent both to the state and to religion; will let others think and determine for him; will decline all research after truth; will suppress every doubt; and his spirit soon sinks, in regard to his most important concerns,

cerns, into a careless slumber, into absolute inaction. Only there where freedom reigns, only there reigns the true life of the spirit. There all its conceptions are brought forth, all its capacities unfolded and applied. There it takes part with heartfelt interest in whatever happens, in all that relates to mankind. There it shrinks from no obstacle, no difficulty terrifies it, that it meets with in its reflections and scrutinies, no chimera of superstition, no dread of man. There is unimpeded communication, unembarrassed circulation of every truth, of every doubt, of every thought, that once excites attention; and each ray of light is darted on a hundred benighted minds, each spark of celestial fire is communicated to a hundred generous hearts; one spirit assists another in its investigations and endeavours. And if mental perfection be thus promoted among mankind, who can express the value of liberty by means of which it is effected?

Liberty,

Liberty, civil as well as religious liberty, is, in the third place, the only efficacious provision against servility, with all its noxious and degrading consequences. Where the former, where civil liberty is wanting, there station and rank supply the place of merit, gold and silver, greatness and power, dignities and titles avail much more than the intrinsic qualities of the man whom they decorate or invest; there absolute command usurps the place of reason, arbitrary punishments and presents that of all inward incitement and proper determination to act in this manner or in that; there the lowly crouch before the lofty, the poor in the presence of the rich, and the subject stands terrified at his prince; there one blindly approves what is said, and admires what is done by the other; there each thinks and lives far more in the opinion and the judgement of another than in himself and from his own impressions; there the art of flattering, the art of dissembling,

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the art of misrepresenting, are the most important arts of life ; there no one undertakes or performs more for the national welfare than he is absolutely obliged to do ; there every one seeks to evade the laws, to neglect his obligations with impunity, and to seize on the rewards of merit without desert ; there men who are in all respects equal, there brethren live so together as if they were perfectly foreign to each other, as if they were creatures of a quite different kind. And how can this fail of stifling in the very bud every species of generous sentiment and action ! how effectually must it eradicate all philanthropy and patriotism !—Where the other, where religious liberty is wanting, there religion appears to the generality of men under a gloomy and a horrid aspect ; there is she by no means his familiar friend, his best and firmest comforter, but a dismal disturber of his peace, a severe and haughty despot ever threatening and dictating, and
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arrogating an implicit faith an irrational obedience; there must her confessors be constantly doing violence to themselves, suppress their natural feelings, and contradict and counteract the plainest declarations of their reason; there must they be filled more with a slavish dread of God and of the future world, than with filial love towards their heavenly father, and cheered by delightful prospects into a better life; there must they testify to men, as weak and as frail as themselves, the reverence and submission which are only due to God and truth; there will a man be often in thralldom to the most shameful superstition, and must groan under all the terrors and humiliations of it. And how can religion appear venerable and amiable to him? How can it be and afford to him what it is ordained to be and to afford to mankind?—No; there alone where civil liberty prevails, a man is of that consequence a man should be; there understand-

ing and honesty pass current for more than all outward distinctions; there men live with men as with their brothers and sisters; there every one shews himself for what he is, and is accordingly esteemed; there truth and openness in the visage and in the manners, in words and deeds, may venture to appear; there, by a secret impulse, the laws are honoured and observed; there manly, generous, and patriotic sentiments prevail; there each man understands and promotes, according to his means, the public welfare, and offers up, with satisfaction, his personal advantages and pleasures to it. — There alone, where religious liberty prevails, will religion be truly important to the understanding and the heart of man; there it employs them both; there it coincides with his whole system of sensation and thought; there it gives light and animation to them both; there it may become the constant guide and conductor of mankind, having reason and freedom for its com-

companions ; there it casts around neither fears nor terrors, but imparts courage and circumspection to its votaries ; there it exalts the mind of man, and enlarges and quiets his heart ; there it condescends to his comprehension, is in no contradiction to the actual world, with his natural feelings and experiences, and requires nothing of him which he is unable to grant, and interdicts him nothing that is harmless and good ; there it ennobles all things in his eyes, inspires him with comfortable and filial sentiments towards God, and makes him regard every duty as a pleasure. And how distant, how very far distant is all this from servility, whose sole consequence is oppression and bondage ! and what a value must it give to freedom !

For the same reasons, liberty is, fourthly, favourable to every kind of virtue. A slave, as such, cannot be virtuous. He can obey ; but he obeys, not from inclination,

tion, but from compulsion.. He can abstain from evil, and do good; but he has neither an inward abhorrence of the one, nor a preponderant love to the other. He abstains from the wrong and does the right, only insomuch as he is obliged to abstain, and compelled to do. Thus does the man who is not animated by liberty observe the laws of the state, thus does he observe the precepts of religion. Both are oppressive to him, as a heavy burden imposed on him against his will, which he would readily shake from his shoulders if it could be done without danger. He accordingly discharges himself of it as often as he is unobserved, and can indulge the hope of escaping correction.—No; freedom is the principle, the soul of all real virtue, of all great endeavours and all glorious actions. When I may myself examine and judge what I do or neglect, what I think and believe, what I hope and what I ought to fear; when I may convince myself by
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rational and free disquisition, of the truth of my belief, of the validity and reasonableness of my duties, of the solidity of my hope or my fear, and then may follow my tuitions and convictions; then it is that my own heart impels me thereto; then I adhere firmly to that which I acknowledge for truth; then I do that which I ought to do, willingly and readily, according to my abilities; then actual hatred arises in me against every thing evil; and real, inward love towards whatever is beautiful, and right, and good; then I shun neither obstacle nor difficulty in pursuance of my conscience, in the discharge of my duty; then do I, not barely that which I am obliged to do, but all that I am able to perform; then I think and act in secret, just as in the sight of the world; then harmony subsists in all that I think, and will, and do; then I strive constantly after purer and higher perfection; and then alone I act virtuously and am virtuous. And where

has virtue shone in greater lustre, where has she undertaken and atchieved more glorious deeds, where has her sense and spirit more generally prevailed, where has she left fairer monuments of disinterestedness, of generosity, of fortitude, of painful and magnanimous sacrifices, of most extraordinary vigour and greatness of mind, than in places where she has enjoyed the benign influence of freedom, and been totally animated by its power?

Liberty, civil as well as religious liberty, is, fifthly, the parent, the guardian of arts, of sciences, and of every kind of public and private prosperity. He that would attain to any considerable degree of sufficiency in some liberal art, or carry it to a certain sort of perfection, must have a free and generous mind; his understanding must not be fettered by prejudice, nor kept under by any dread of man, nor retarded in its arduous flight by any human authority.

rity. He must give full scope to his reflections, to his feelings, and to his fancy; must go in quest of truth, of beauty, and perfection, on all sides, with unbounded liberty; their images, their presence alone must be sacred to him.—With the most important, the most exalted of all sciences, with the science of religion, the case is precisely the same. All violence and constraint is averse to her spirit. She is the daughter of heaven, and allows of no controul from men. She associates only with the friends of freedom. To them she confides her secrets; to them she appears in her native and celestial form. The slave only perceives her in a tawdry disguise, tricked out in a garb of human texture, under which her true figure is concealed. There alone where reflection on religious matters is not confined by established rules, not chained to human confessions of faith; there alone where the right of free inquiry is retained by her confessors, there alone

can the knowledge of religion become more facile, more consistent and plain; there alone can she be purified from human defilements, secured against human abuses, and become that universal dispenser of light and life she was ordained to be.—And, as religion, as arts and sciences flourish under the fostering influences of liberty, so also every species of public and private prosperity are cherished by the same genial power. She communicates life and action to all. She strengthens the weak, she quickens the slothful, she encourages and requites the active and industrious, facilitates and promotes the effects of all public-spirited undertakings, the success of all kinds of manufactures and trade, and shews us fertile and smiling fields, and diligent and chearful employment, where before was the gloomy wilderness and the uninhabited desert.

Yet

Yet more. Only in the sentiment and enjoyment of liberty, of civil as well as religious liberty, can a man support his real dignity as is befitting the man and the christian. What more distinguishes man from beast? What is his boasted pre-eminence, if it be not liberty? That he does not blindly follow an irresistible instinct; that he is not obliged merely to move by mechanical laws; that he can consider, reflect, and chuse; that he can resolve, and do that which he accounts the best, according to what he knows; is not this the true dignity of man? And how can the slave maintain and enjoy it; the slave who is loaded with ponderous and oppressive chains, who must implicitly follow the will of another, who feels himself thwarted in thought, and manacled in action, by arbitrary prescriptions and controul?—How differently is the dignity of the man and the christian supported by him who knows the happiness of freedom! The freer a man

is as a citizen, the stronger, the greater, the weightier, is the consciousness of himself. Whatever he thinks, and says, and does, as such, acquires thereby a certain value. He is no indifferent or useless member of the state ; he takes an interest in all that happens to it ; has an influence, or thinks he has an influence, on it all ; feels the prosperity of the whole society as if it were his own, and the damages it sustains as a detriment to himself ; he works and toils for posterity as well as for his contemporaries, and hopes, in his descendants, or by his public-spirited institutions and endowments, to be the benefactor of his brethren long after his death. And how great must he thus feel himself to be ! What a dignity must it give him in all his labours and actions !—And thus likewise it is with religious liberty. The freer a man is as a worshiper of God, as a christian, so much the more is he alive to the privilege of being so, so much the more worthily will he

he support it. He alone worships God in spirit and in truth, with understanding and sentiment. He alone is impelled by his real wants to all the duties of religion and worship, to every act of piety, and every exercise of devotion. He alone completely feels the happiness and the honour of the relationship in which he stands with the Creator as his creature. To him alone is it the true food and refreshment of his spirit, when he is busied in silent meditations on religion, when he, with a tranquil mind, with a mind unfettered by prejudice and the dread of man, can proceed farther and farther in investigating and applying the most important truths, when he can elevate himself with joy and reverence to the first and most perfect of beings, and can perfectly acquiesce in his own representations of him, and repose in the sentiment of his love. The more freely the man in general thinks and acts, so much the more intimate and chearful consciof-

ness has he of the faculties and aptitudes of his nature, of the grand design of his existence, of his affinity with beings of a higher order, and with the deity himself, of all that he at present is and shall hereafter be. And must not the liberty that exalts him thereto, which develops and maintains this consciousness in him, be of infinite value in his eyes?

Liberty is, lastly, the truest, the most comfortable enjoyment of life. No slave can be thoroughly satisfied with this life; but too often is it a burden to him, but too often does he voluntarily cast it off, as an insupportable load; his faculties, his goods, his time, his very life is not his own; the possession, the use, the continuance of them depend upon the caprice of his lord. What he yesterday earned by the sweat of his brow, is ravished from him to-day; and the plans and designs he is busied with to-day will be

be defeated and frustrated to-morrow. He is, and has, and does, and enjoys only what his owner will have him to be, and to have, and to do, and to enjoy. What great value then can any thing be of to him ! How tasteless, or rather how bitter to him must the enjoyment of them be ! No ; none but the free man can quietly enjoy, and thoroughly relish their sweets. Has he civil liberty ; then as a man and a citizen he has neither violence nor oppression to fear, while he is obedient to the laws. What he is and has, that he is and has, not for the stranger, but for himself and his own. What he has invented, wrought, or earned, that is his, of it he reaps the fruits. He can pursue any lawful employment without molestation, prosecute any innoxious design at pleasure, and, even when he is working for his descendants, for futurity, has even then a far greater assurance that his labours will not be in vain, that his purpose will not be defeated.

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He is forced neither to swell the treasures of the tyrant, nor to satiate the rapacity of his servants, nor to consume his faculties and his life in low and creeping slavery. He can dwell in his hut in security and peace, follow his employment in the calm of obscurity, enjoy at his ease the comforts of domestic and social life, and is tormented with no fears of being arrested unawares by some arbitrary order of the government, or of being despoiled, by the machinations of any secret and powerful adversary, of his goods, of his honour, of his children, or the natural use of his freedom. Does he enjoy liberty of religion and conscience; then the religion he professes is actually his own religion, and the conscience he reveres is likewise his own. The considerations and reasons that have led and determined him, are his own considerations and reasons. His faith is the effect of his reflections, the result of his conviction. He needs not have a respect
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for any error, for any hypothesis, for any incoherent system, for any turnings and windings from the beaten path, nor be alarmed at any uncommon elucidation so terrifying to the servile formalist. He is neither in dread of the ghastly spectre of error, nor the superior brightness of truths but little known. He has principles to which he adheres, by which he tries all things, which console him and guide him safely, even while they leave him undetermined and doubtful. Whatever he knows of religious matters, he knows it to the bottom; whatever he believes, he believes it firmly; whatever he hopes he hopes with confidence; whatever he thinks and does in all these respects, he thinks and does with earnestness and joy. And thus does the happy man, who has been nursed in the lap of liberty, who enjoys his proper freedom as a man and as a christian, pass his life in cheerfulness and comfort. He uses and enjoys the goods and advantages of

of it with a confident satisfaction ; and in that enjoyment has no fear of being disturbed by the arbitrary orders of a spiritual or temporal authority.

And now judge for yourselves, whether liberty, whether civil and religious liberty, be not of great value, since it is the natural state of man, and the warmest wish of his heart ; since it so much promotes the activity and perfection of his mental powers ; since it secures him from all fervility ; since it is so favourable to virtue ; since it is the parent of arts, of sciences, of public and private prosperity ; since it is the firmest support of the dignity of man and the christian, and the most delicious enjoyment of life. Yes ; freedom is an inestimable blessing ; a possession without which almost all the rest would lose the greatest part of their worth, and by which they are all of them multiplied and exalted.

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But the knowledge, the conviction of the value of liberty, must not lie idle in our breasts ; it must have an influence on our conduct.

If ye confess and feel the value of liberty, then patronize and protect it wherever it subsists ; enjoy your own felicity, but seek not to destroy or circumscribe the freedom of others. He that by any means undermines or diminishes liberty ; he that forges fetters for his brethren, or brings them under a yoke, or prevents them from breaking and casting them off ; he is an enemy of mankind, a traitor to the human race, an ignominious slave, who would do all in his power to reduce and debase all men to the same servile dispositions with himself. No ; the freedom of our brother must be just as sacred to us as his property, as his honour, as his life, as his whole amount of happiness ; since, that once gone, all the others lose frequently

quently the whole of their value. Of all criminals, the tyrant is the most atrocious, the little tyrant as well as the great, the servant of the prince as well as the prince himself; and no crime must draw after it more humiliation, and shame, and torment, in the future world, than this, as none is more manifestly in direct opposition to the will of God, to all his ends and injunctions, to the spirit of true religion and christianity, to the whole of human happiness, than this.

This, however, is not enough. If you confess the value of liberty, then also promote and advance it. Do so especially, you who shine in polished circles, who fill the higher stations, you that are in the classes of the learned, who are teachers and guides of the people, who as fine writers influence the taste and the principles of the times, or are distinguished above others by superior talents, and more generous sentiments.

ments. It is an indispensable duty incumbent on you all to support and advance the cause of liberty. You are the curators of the nation, the guardian of its constitution, the interpreters of its rights, the arbiters between the government and the subject; and sad is your case if you do not employ the deference, and respect, and authority you possess, to the ends for which the Father of mankind, the Judge of the world, has invested you with them! Maintain then and protect the rights of mankind; defend and support the equally sacred rights of conscience. Neither degrade yourselves by a blind and slavish obedience, nor by a superstitious submission to the ordinances and tradition of men. Beware of becoming, either in one respect or the other, the servants of men. In both respects try all things, and cleave to that which, according to the soundest dictates of your judgement, is the best. Shew respect to the great and mighty of
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the earth ; but flatter them not ; shrink not in their presence, as if they were creatures of a superior order. Judge of their actions with discretion ; but judge of them by the self-same laws as you pronounce upon the actions of other men ; and neither applaud or approve of any thing merely because it has been said or done by a man that is surrounded by particular pomp. Reverence the religion of the realm, and its teachers, and its rites. But decline not to examine the doctrines of that religion, to discuss the decisions of those teachers, and to judge of the propriety or impropriety of those rites. Allow full scope to the progress of human knowledge ; discountenance no decent investigation of received maxims and doctrines, be the consequence what it may. Truth can at length be no loser by it ; and one perspicuous thought, thoroughly understood and deeply felt, is of more value, and does more good, than ten others, heard of one man and repeated

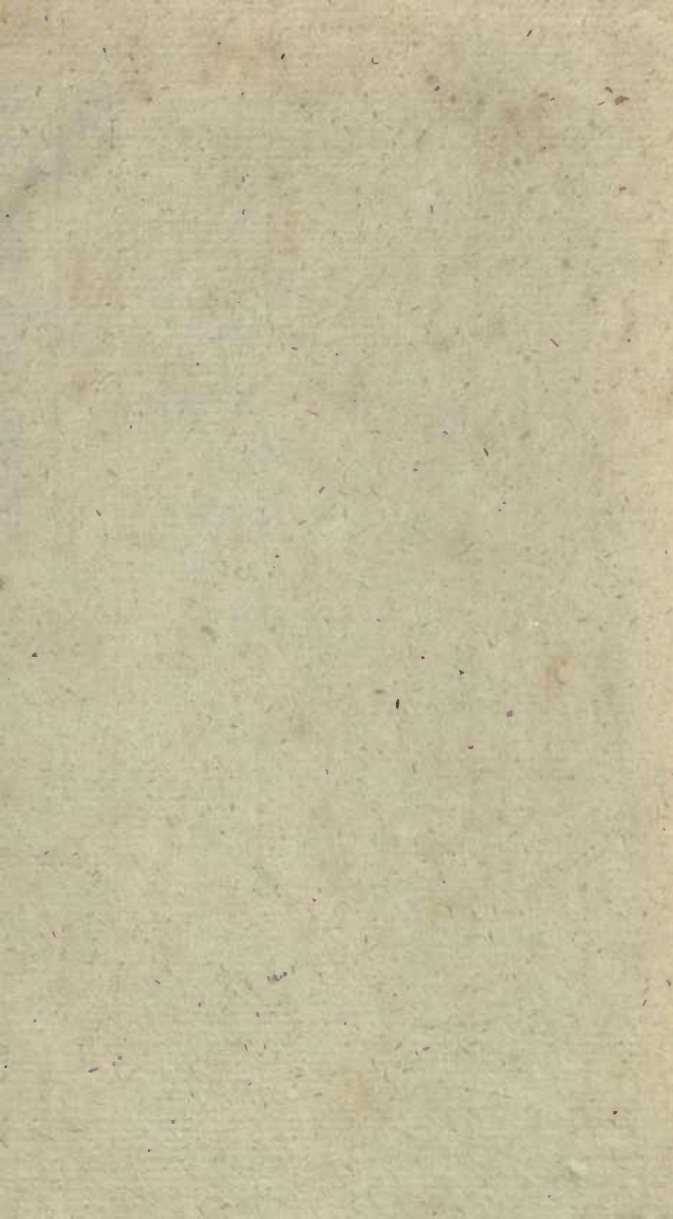
to another, and understood of neither from principle and conviction.

Lastly, the more liberty ye enjoy, the more let it effect that good which it is able and ought to produce. If you may worship God after your own principles; then worship him with so much the greater cheerfulness and ardour; then adore him so much the more in spirit and in truth, with understanding and sentiment. Are you allowed to think and to judge for yourselves in religious matters; then reflect so much the more on those important concerns; then let it be so much the more your most pleasant employment to explore and to know them; then endeavour the more to give solidity to your faith. Woe to him whom freedom to think, whom liberty of religion and conscience, renders indifferent to religion and truth, or inattentive to the voice of conscience! Instead of being free, and of being better and happier by liberty,

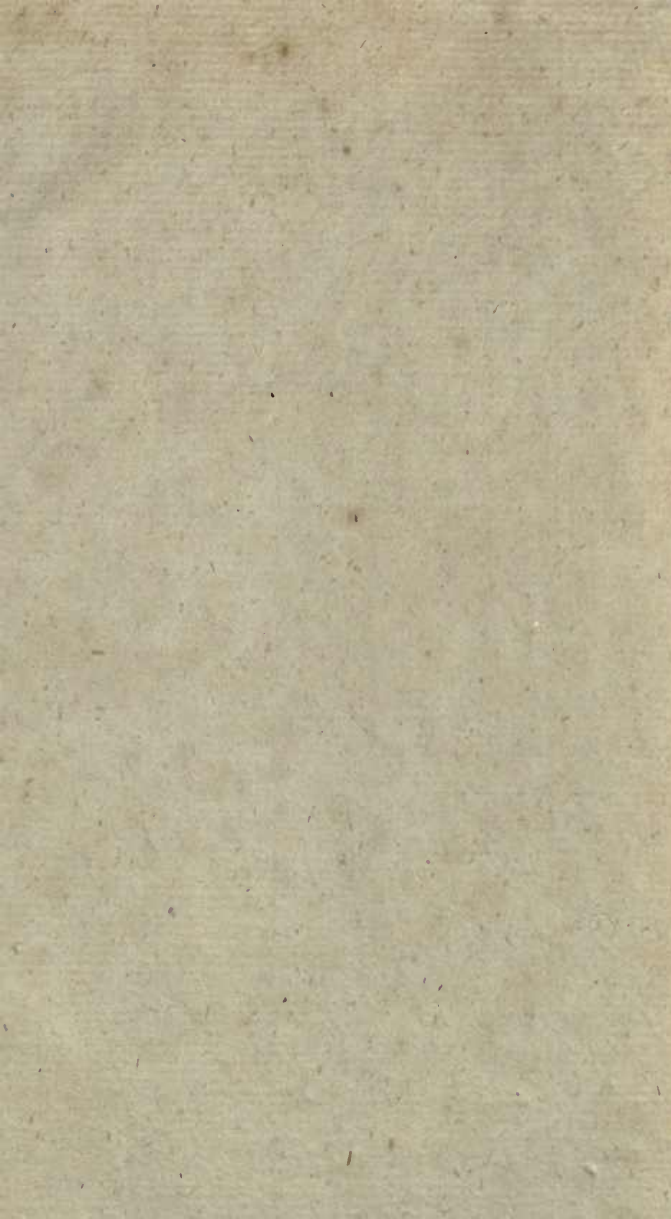
he only barter to his loss one slavery for another; and though he be not oppressed by man, yet is he in bondage to his own lusts and passions. No; he who would not render himself unworthy of the privilege of seeing with his own eyes, and of pursuing his object in the way he has chosen for himself, must use his eyes with so much the more assiduity, and walk on his way with the greater circumspection. Do you enjoy civil liberty; then observe the laws of the state and of the society to which you belong, with so much the readier and stricter obedience; for the maintenance and observance of the laws is the ground of all freedom. Promote the welfare of that state, of that society, with so much the more zeal, as it is the more intimately connected with your own, as you may and must have so much the more influence on its prosperity, as you find and enjoy in it so much the more protection and peace, security and happiness. Think

and act in all respects with so much the more liberality and public spirit, as you are so far exalted above the state of slavery. — Strive all of you, in the last place, after that greater, that still more essential liberty of the sage and the christian, of him who governs himself, who controuls his desires and passions, seeks his happiness, not so much in externals as in his intrinsic perfection, forgets not his dignity, supports it in every condition, uninterruptedly follows the precepts of his reason and his conscience, and chuses nothing but what God wills, and does nothing but what is in conformity to the will of God. Yes; this is the liberty which will compensate the want of any other, and will be constantly bringing us nearer to the mark of our high vocation.

and in all respects wish to leave the
same liberty and public spirit, as you
are to be extended above the line of slavery.
—But all of you in the full place, after
that great, that still more colossal il-
lusion of the age and the character of him
who governs himself, who commands his
doctors and preachers, looks the negroes
not so much in respect to his rights as
in respect to his dignity, to his
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lowly the progress of his nation and his
conduct, and chooses nothing but what
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